

Old Capitol Building  
PO Box 47220  
Olympia, WA 98504-7220

## Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission

### **Commissioners**

W. David Shaw  
*Chairman*

Leonora Schmit  
*Vice-Chair*

Dr. Terry Bergeson

Richelle Bouse

Dave Fisher

Arthur Himmler

James Kelly

Jim Spady

### **Executive Director**

Christopher M  
Thompson

# Annual Report

To the

Washington State Legislature

Office of the Governor

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

State Board of Education

December 2003



# Table of Contents

<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. Progress .....</b>	<b>4</b>
A. Reading and Math goals	
B. High School Graduation goals	
C. Science WASL standard setting	
D. Convening Stakeholders	
<b>II. Findings .....</b>	<b>9</b>
A. The NCLB Act and Washington State's Accountability System .....	10
1. Re-Aligning Assistance Model	
a. State assistance capacity and the scope of AYP needs	
b. Focused assistance program interim results	
2. New Assessment Development Proceeding	
3. Accountability System Lacks Consistency	
B. Research Projects Concerning Funding .....	22
1. I-728 Fund Use	
2. Realities of Funding Report	
3. Quality Education Model Report	
C. Stakeholder Retreat .....	26
1. Leadership	
2. Other	
D. Achievement Gap .....	28
1. WSSDA Task Force	
2. Federal Way School District Efforts	
3. Early Learning Targeting the Gap	
E. Certificate of Mastery Implementation .....	32
<b>III. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>34</b>
A. Vision	
B. Accountability	
C. Funding	
D. Governance Reform	
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>47</b>
A. Revisions to the NCLB Act	
B. Commission/stakeholder meeting summary	
C. Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools	
D. Adequate Yearly Progress Results	
E. WASL results for schools in focused assistance	
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>75</b>

## Preface

Over ten years ago, our state embarked on an ambitious educational reform committed to preparing Washington state graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This state made the commitment to require students to meet or exceed internationally competitive standards, and to hold schools, districts and educators accountable for educating ALL students to these higher standards. Much progress has been made. There is, however, very critical work yet to be done. Hundreds of teachers and administrators across a continuum of schools and districts have made amazing breakthroughs to improve student performance, but as a state system, we have not demonstrated enough resolve to accomplish our ambitious mission.

“Accept no excuses.”

This simple, profound dictum must guide our forward path. Where is the resolute determination that was evident when we first embarked on our education reform efforts? What is missing from our efforts to complete the historic mission of lifting all children up to high standards? The missing pieces are numerous; and many are very important, but let us not be distracted from the core problem – collectively we do not act as if we are fully committed to this mission.

There have been great successes since 1993: many students have risen to the challenge we’ve presented to them, and have made significant gains on the WASL over the past six years. Washington students are among the top performers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress writing test. Our students, this year, posted the highest SAT scores in the country among states where at least 30 percent of students take the test, which totals 24 states plus the District of Columbia. These accomplishments are a tribute to our students, our educators and the people in our communities who have risen time and again to overcome challenges that threaten our ability to fully achieve the mission of ALL students meeting higher standards.

In 1993, Washington state made a conscious decision to move deliberately in implementing a system of standards-based school reform. This strategic approach had the advantage of allowing sufficient time to learn from experiences in other states in developing a comprehensive and cohesive system to help students reach the proficiency levels required for success after their school careers. A decade later, it now appears that this lengthy implementation schedule may have had the unintended disadvantage of removing the sense of urgency on the part of some in our state.

We must act now. Today’s eighth graders will be the first graduating class required to have a Certificate of Mastery in order to earn a high school diploma. They enter high school this fall and deserve to know the rules governing their path to high school graduation. In just two years, this group of students will sit for a tenth grade exam that represents a sea-change in expectations of high school graduates. Have we, as adults, fulfilled our bargain to provide adequate support to these students to ensure their success?

From the elected leaders in the marbled halls of the Capitol Dome, to the school leaders who manage bustling and overloaded middle schools, to the faculty leaders of college classrooms populated with future teachers, from these and countless other leaders in every aspect of community life we hear not unified resolve and commitment but rather dissension, frustration and concern.

The legislative inaction of 2003 is but a symptom of the ambivalence afflicting education reform. In the face of the clear and urgent imperative to answer lingering questions about how we will support students attempting to meet higher graduation demands, the Legislature blinked.

Lawmakers may point and say there isn't enough accountability in the school system or that we're under stress of difficult economic conditions. We know these are challenging times for all, but we must accept no excuses. To educators who say our state accountability system has been negatively affected by new federal mandates, we say you too are correct. Yet again, we must accept no excuses. Children and youth in school today cannot build productive and satisfying lives upon the foundation of our excuses. Come what may, our resolve must begin and end with the children in our charge. Our future success and the success of our children rests on our resolve. Leaders at every level of our school system must stand firm, act with conviction, and see us through to our ambitious mission – a quality education for ALL students.

## Introduction

The primary focus of the Commission over the past year has been to work closely and cooperatively with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction toward the objective of aligning state and federal accountability policy.

A considerable challenge in accomplishing this objective has been that it has not always been fully clear what the federal government was going to require and what it might be prepared to allow. Both federal law and federal regulations are clear and specific in some respects, and in other areas allow states to develop a variety of implementation options.

The guiding principle the Commission has embraced is that, for the benefit of local communities and educators, the accountability system should be as clear and coherent as possible. The Commission has endeavored to remove barriers to system alignment and to build consistency into what is expected of educators and students.

This approach springs *not* from a belief in the absolute perfection of the federal accountability system in the recent re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act). The Commission very strongly supports the purpose of the NCLB Act, eliminating the achievement gap, and likewise believes in the soundness of a number of its key strategies, including the disaggregation of data by race/ethnicity and economic disadvantage, annual testing in reading and math at each grade from 3 through 8, and the requirement that school district officials consider progressive intervention in Title I-funded persistently low performing schools.

Though there is much to be applauded and embraced in the intent and the mechanics of the NCLB Act, it also contains some important elements that must be modified. These are discussed in an appendix to this report.

The reason for the Commission's emphasis on alignment is to make expectations as simple as possible from the perspective of local educators, students and their families.

A singular focus on simplicity or clarity may carry potential disadvantages as well. The Commission is considering options that may make for less simplicity in the accountability system, but which may be needed to enhance its fairness and accuracy. These issues will be addressed in the report. The state accountability system remains a work-in-progress and as the work of building that system progresses, simplicity and accuracy and fairness will need to be brought into an optimal balance.

## I. Progress

### A. Reading and Math Goals

The Commission adopted reading and math performance improvement goals in 2001 for grades 4, 7 and 10. Those goals called for each school and district with 10 or more students in a tested grade to improve their own results by 25 percent over a three-year period ending with the 2004 Washington assessment of student learning (WASL). The Commission's annual report for 2002 described a number of sources of tension between those goals and the newer federal performance improvement requirements under the NCLB Act.

While the Commission recognized a number of merits of the pre-existing state goals, it decided to repeal the 25 percent improvement goals and replace them with goals aligned with the new approach outlined in the federal act<sup>1</sup>.

Using the rule-making procedure outlined in the Administrative Procedure Act, including public hearings, the Commission adopted the new goals in rule on April 7, 2003.

The reading and math performance targets are intended to be the same targets that are determined by OSPI pursuant to NCLB Act implementation. The Commission's intent under the rule is to ensure the methodology chosen by OSPI to determine the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency each year through 2014 is the same one used to determine the goals required by the rule. Thus, OSPI is relied upon to make the calculations necessary to determine what the minimum performance of schools and districts shall be in order to meet the goal.

### B. High School Graduation Goals

In 2002 the Legislature granted the Commission authority to set performance improvement goals for high school graduation rates (SB 6456). Shortly before passage of the state legislation, the NCLB Act was signed into law. The federal law, in addition to requiring that reading and math test scores be measured and monitored in specified ways, required states to adopt goals for high school graduation rates and use the results to determine whether adequate yearly progress is being made.

---

<sup>1</sup> Neither the "uniform bar" nor the "safe harbor" component of federal procedures for determining adequate yearly progress align well with the state's prior 25 percent improvement goal. The uniform bar does not align in part because it is completely independent of the individual school's own prior performance. Safe Harbor does not align because unlike the three-year, 25 percent state goal, safe harbor is **not cumulative**; all the way through 2013 safe harbor remains a comparison solely of the two most recent years' results. If a school did make exactly 10 percent improvement (as called for in Safe Harbor) three years in a row, that would amount to a cumulative 27.1 percent improvement. A school with sufficiently large and sufficiently steady improvement could meet a three-year, 25 percent improvement target and yet not meet the safe harbor improvement threshold each year. Conversely, a school could make safe harbor two out of three years, staying out of school improvement status and yet fall short of a three-year, 25 percent goal.

The federal law is not prescriptive concerning how rigorous the graduation rate goals must be. Nor does it specify how graduation rate goals must be structured. This gave the Commission the opportunity to consider a wider range of options than it had in the case of reading and math test score goals. Based on input from educators and other stakeholders, the Commission decided to set the high school minimum graduation rate goals at the lesser of **either**:

- the statewide average for the graduating class of 2002

**or**

- a one percentage point annual improvement over the school or district's own graduation rate in the baseline year.

It was estimated by OSPI that the statewide average graduation rate was approximately 73 percent. The goal for the graduating classes of 2003 through 2013 is a rate of 73 percent or a one percentage point improvement each year over the school or district's own baseline, whichever is lower.

Both the structure and rigor of the graduation goals change substantially for the graduating class of 2014. In 2014, the goal is a minimum graduation rate of 85 percent and furthermore, the target rate of 85 percent applies to each of the subgroups of students listed in the federal act. These include all major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities and limited-English proficiency.

During public meetings and commission deliberations on the rule establishing the goals, some concern was expressed that these graduation goals were not sufficiently rigorous and that they failed to hold school districts accountable for students who struggle against the achievement gap. For example, reported graduation rates for Native American, Latino and African American students are much lower than official statewide average rates. One legislator expressed in writing the concern that "the goals set for graduation rates are too modest."<sup>2</sup>

In response to concerns expressed and in light of serious questions about the quality of current data on graduation rates, the Commission committed – in the actual language of the rules themselves – to review the graduation rate goals in 2004 when data on the class of 2003 are available. Potential changes could be considered at that time.

---

<sup>2</sup> February 24, 2003 letter from Sen. Bill Finkbeiner

### C. Science WASL Standard Setting

State law assigns the Commission the duty of setting performance standards for the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Setting performance standards involves deciding how high students must score on the assessment to be deemed to have “met the standard.” It also involves setting the score that marks the dividing line between “meets standard” and “exceeds standard.” Finally, standard setting includes deciding what score will mark the boundary between performance deemed “basic” and performance deemed “below basic.”

In sum, standard setting requires establishing three points on the scale that will sort all possible student scores into one of four categories. For example in reading, results are classified as follows:

- Scores below **375** – **Below Basic** (formerly termed Level 1)
- Scores of **375** and up to 399 – **Basic** (formerly Level 2)
- Scores of **400** and up to 424 – **Proficient** [“meets standard”] (Level 3)
- Scores of **425** and higher – **Advanced** [“exceeds standard”] (Level 4)

The three so-called “cut scores” for reading are 375, 400, and 425. Mathematics WASL scale scores are set up in the same way. A technical process known as “equating” is used to ensure that from year to year there is no variation in how difficult it is for a student to score a 400 or a 375. Anchoring these two crucial points on the scoring scale enables valid monitoring of year to year improvement in results, since the level of difficulty for students is held constant at those two fixed points.

The spring of 2003 was the first time an operational assessment in science was administered. Under the assessment process used for the WASL, standards are set after students statewide take the assessment. Based on a study done by OSPI in 2002, the standard setting process in science was modified and improved over the process used for reading, writing, listening and mathematics in the mid-1990s.

The testing contractor, Riverside Publishing, under the supervision of OSPI staff, assembled a standard setting committee. These individuals are teachers, business leaders, and community members from across the state of Washington. They were selected by OSPI and Riverside from nominations submitted by a wide range of educational and non-educational associations, organizations and individuals.

A separate standard setting committee was formed for each of the two grade levels tested in Science, grades 8 and 10. For certain phases of the standard setting process, the two committees work together. For other phases, they divide into the two separate grade level groups.

Briefly, the process used for setting the performance standards is as follows. The contractor assembles a booklet of all the test items. The items are sequenced in order of difficulty, with the easiest test question appearing first, and the most difficult item placed at the end of the booklet. Each individual on the standard setting committee identifies the specific question in the booklet that he or she believes is the hardest question that two out of three students who are right on the boundary line of meeting standard should answer correctly. The individual places his or her “bookmark” at that test item in the booklet.

The committee then is led through an elaborate process for reconciling the differences between where each individual member of the committee placed his or her bookmark. When the committee has arrived at a consensus “bookmark” they have arrived at the standard.

The contractor uses the consensus “bookmarked” spot in the booklet to determine how many raw score points a student must earn to meet the standard. The raw point range of 0 to approximately 70 is converted to a scale score range that runs from the low 200s to the high 500s (the number of raw points available varies by subject; the scale score ranges also vary from one subject to another and over time).

As mentioned above, the committees also have to go through a similar process for determining the two other “cut scores” – the score which distinguishes between “below basic” and “basic” performance, and the score that separates “advanced” performance from “proficient” performance.

To describe the process used by OSPI and Riverside Publishing in more precise terms, the standard setting process proceeds through 9 steps, including the following:

- Review of process of selection for judges, description of the purpose of the standards and of the standard setting process.
- Review of the process for how the assessment is developed and administered, and administration of the assessment to committee members.
- Review, and discuss interpretation of performance descriptions for each of three levels of student performance.
- Description of item mapping procedure and standard setting procedure.
- Round one of ratings by individual members, aggregation of ratings, and review of results; this is followed by two additional rounds of going through the same steps.
- Final judge recommendations, aggregation of final ratings, presentation of final ratings; and
- Evaluation of the standard setting process.

This process was conducted for Science tests at grades 8 and 10 over the course of about four days at the end of July. Following the completion of this process, the Commission held a special meeting to hear about the process and to view the results. Facilitators with technical expertise who led the standard setting process, and some standard setting committee members who participated in the process, presented their experiences and impressions to the Commission. The representatives from the standard setting groups expressed strong confidence in the process used and in the standard setting results themselves. Commission review of the results included reviewing data (that was confidential at the time) regarding the percentage of tested students who met the proposed standard. The Commission approved the standards recommended by the standard setting committees.

#### **D. Convening Stakeholders**

In June the Commission organized a gathering of diverse organizations from within and outside the K-12 education community. High level representatives from all the major K-12 groups and most of the members of the Commission attended the two-day forum. While legislators and representatives of the Office of the Governor were not in attendance at this meeting, their participation in the 2002 meeting was appreciated and will be earnestly sought again if another such gathering is organized in 2004.

Facilitated by a program officer from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the discussion was intended to provide concerned leaders with the opportunity to jointly envision the path of education reform over the next ten years.

Participants shared their thoughts of what success will look like ten years from now. In smaller groups, participants then focused on four key topics and outlined what steps need to be taken in the near term to achieve those successes envisioned ten years later. The four topics that received the most attention were leadership, teaching quality, accountability and “P-16” as a concept of basic education. [“P-16” refers to education spanning a range from Pre-kindergarten (“P”) through higher education (“grade 16” referring to completion of a four-year degree).]

Additional topics that formed subjects of discussion included safety, funding, compensation, professional development, vision, and governance. (See appendix B for details.)

Participants in general appreciated this unique opportunity to share concerns with partner organizations and other interested stakeholders. Most believe the Commission is serving a valuable function not being fulfilled currently by any other entity – convening important leaders to explore ways of pushing education reform efforts to the next and higher level of accomplishment.

## II. Findings

The Commission observes that there are many signs of progress. For all the concerns outlined in this report, we would do well to recognize and celebrate the substantial improvements accumulated by students, teachers and administrators in spite of the unresolved problems.

- WASL scores are higher in reading, writing and mathematics at each of the grade levels tested.
- SAT scores in Washington are higher than any other state that tests at least half of its graduating seniors on that test. Both SAT and ACT results are above the national average and improving. Washington has the highest SAT scores among the 24 states and the District of Columbia that test more than 30 percent of their students on the SAT. Washington is tied for second in average ACT scores among the 13 states that test between 10 percent and 30 percent of graduates on the ACT.
- For the first time in 2003, over half of Washington fourth graders are meeting standard in writing.
- Norm-referenced test results are up and remain above the national average; National Assessment of Educational Progress results are also improving.

### Demographics Are Not Destiny

A number of pioneering schools with high proportions of families in poverty, English language learners and students of racial and ethnic backgrounds that historically have achieved at lower levels, are beating the odds and achieving at very high levels. Schools such as Stanley Elementary in Tacoma, Bemiss Elementary in Spokane, and Blue Ridge Elementary in Walla Walla are overcoming the general trend of the achievement gap. A 2001 review by The Education Trust found nationwide there were 3,592 high-performing, high-poverty schools and 2,305 high-performing schools with high proportions of students of color.

### Need for Continued Improvement

Having noted these impressive signs of improvement, the Commission also sees a great need of continued improvement. Washington, with a 66 percent high school graduation rate, ranks 39<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states, according to a study by the Manhattan Institute.<sup>3</sup> In Washington, graduation rates range from 77 percent among Asian/Pacific Islander students to 48 percent among Native American students. The achievement gap between

---

<sup>3</sup> Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Sept. 17, 2003. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned the study for the New York-based Institute. The study also reported a “college readiness” rate of 24 percent in Washington, and 32 percent nationwide, in 2001.

white and Hispanic students in fourth grade is 31.8 percent in reading and 30.7 percent in mathematics. According to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 51 percent of recent high school graduates attending community college take remedial courses, most frequently in mathematics.

With the advent of new assessment targets and federally imposed consequences for Title I schools and districts, the stakes have been raised. Many educators and others voice doubts about assessment and accountability, particularly with so many well-regarded schools and districts not measuring up to new federal expectations.

In spite of some disadvantages, the system we have for tracking improvement is our assessment system. That said, the **Commission has always opposed** the school of thought in accountability according to which a *particular action* is assumed appropriate for any school with a *particular test score*. Rather, the Commission has consistently subscribed to the view that a particular test score should trigger a *particular form of inquiry* that engages local and state officials in a joint search for the best path ahead.

Assessment is meant to be a tool for improvement, and not a means of punishment. In our view, holding schools accountable for student learning is not “punishment.” Serving children, not punishing adults, is both the purpose and the effect of assessment and accountability systems. The Commission states again, as it did in its first annual report, it does not believe a particular set of test score criteria (such as AYP or other systems) is necessarily a reliable evaluation of the quality of staff or programs in a given school.

## **A. NCLB Act and Washington State’s Accountability System**

A major objective of Commission efforts in the past couple of years has been to create alignment and consistency between federal and state accountability policy. There has also been a focus on where our state should resist pressures for change that may be related to the federal system. For example, the prior state system did not set targets for state-level performance. Washington state was previously concerned with district and school level performance. However, federal provisions now have created state level performance targets as well.

A problem arises, however, if any attempt is made to compare one state’s performance with any other state’s performance. In fact, there is no validity whatsoever to any state-level comparisons under NCLB Act adequate yearly progress provisions for states. Federal legislation requires states to define proficiency, but states are permitted full discretion in what level of performance will be deemed proficient within each individual state. As a result, states have set very different standards for proficiency.

Indeed, some states have even defined proficiency in two different ways – with one level of performance defined as “proficient” for federal purposes, and a different level of performance defined as “proficient” for state purposes. While those states may have rationales for those decisions that they find convincing, we believe our state was wise to avoid that course of action. Washington has resisted the temptation to revise our

definition of proficiency in order to compare more favorably with other states or to generate higher percentages of students in a “proficiency” category. Instead, our thinking about what knowledge and skills students will need to succeed has driven our state’s definition of proficiency – not a desire to artificially boost student achievement.

## **1. Re-Aligning Assistance Model**

The Commission was assigned by the Legislature the duty of adopting criteria to identify schools in need of assistance. In November 2000 the Commission adopted such criteria for elementary and middle schools.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction administers state and federal funds to provide assistance to schools identified in part by these criteria adopted by the Commission. Based on the Commission’s prior work on elementary and middle school criteria, OSPI extrapolated to develop criteria to identify high schools eligible to receive focused assistance.

Focused assistance is conceived as assistance for a school provided through the joint efforts of OSPI, the school district, and the staff and community at the school. The process begins with a year-long planning phase led by a state-funded facilitator chosen by OSPI and assigned to a school. During the planning year the participants collaboratively develop an improvement plan based on an audit and a performance agreement.

It is a voluntary assistance program currently providing assistance to about 25 new schools per year for a period of three years; 67 schools are currently being served.

### **a. State assistance capacity and the scope of AYP needs**

#### **Alignment by the numbers**

This program was developed in 2000-01 and implemented in the 2001-02 school year. Then, midway through the 2001-02 school year, along came the federal NCLB Act. As the NCLB Act has been interpreted and implemented in Washington, the scope of state assistance efforts must dramatically escalate.

In 2003, under provisions of the NCLB Act, 436 schools did not make adequate yearly progress. In addition to the 436 schools, 125 school districts did not make adequate yearly progress. Next year, significantly higher performance will be necessary to make adequate progress. Thus it is probable that hundreds of schools and scores of school districts will be entitled under federal law to state assistance should they request it.

In subsequent years, as the performance levels required to made adequate progress rise steadily and briskly, it is likely still more hundreds of schools and many districts will qualify for assistance by virtue of being deemed in school improvement or district improvement.

It is clear that a program that was designed – and is presently funded – to help 25 schools per year is inadequate to serve the needs of such enormous numbers of schools and districts that will soon need assistance.

### **Alignment beyond the numbers**

The much wider reach cast by the AYP net is not the only force urging re-alignment. What we mean by state assistance itself – the focused assistance model – must now be redefined. When we were working with a handful of the lowest achieving and slowest improving schools in the state, there could be little doubt that these schools need significant, fairly intensive assistance. However, when we move to a group of hundreds of schools and many entire districts as well, we’re dealing with a much more diverse range of academic and educational circumstances.

While focused assistance may be an appropriate support model for the lowest performing schools, state assistance mandated by the NCLB Act must address a much more varied set of circumstances, and must be tailored to widely varying types and levels of need at both the school building level and the district central office level.

OSPI will need more tools in its toolbox than just focused assistance.

We must examine whether there is a need to assist more schools through the model of the focused assistance program. Yet, even if the budget supporting focused assistance needs to be ramped up to serve two or three times as many schools as are served today, the focused assistance model is more elaborate, intensive and costly than some schools and districts will need and perhaps than the state can afford.

### **Differentiated classification**

There is an inevitable corollary to the wider net cast by AYP. Success in a long series of distinct categories may be required to make AYP, depending on the number of students enrolled in a school and the demographic, financial and special program participation characteristics of those students. In contrast, it only takes one misstep to fall short of AYP. The group of 436 schools that did not make AYP last year is certain to include both schools that missed the mark “by an inch” as well as schools that “missed it by a mile.” The rigid structure of how AYP is determined paints both such hypothetical schools with the same broad brush of *not making adequate progress* – a brush that creates an image that some will see as a “failing” school.

The Commission believes that state assistance should take a different form in the school that “missed by an inch” than it does in the school that “missed by a mile.” In addition, the terminology and classification scheme used to characterize the status of these schools must become more sophisticated than the black-and-white picture of the AYP system that only tells us “yes-or-no.”

There has been much discussion about how the NCLB Act may require a school to demonstrate progress in up to 9 student groups in reading, 9 more in mathematics, and for testing at least 95 percent of students in all groups and on both subjects, as well as one

additional factor. [The theoretical maximum number of categories a school could have for one tested grade is 37. In fact, for most schools the number of categories that apply to their student populations, is much smaller.]

It is important to monitor, as OSPI has reported, not simply whether the school fell short in at least one category, but also for schools that did not make AYP, in *how many* categories the school did not make AYP. However, the *number* of categories for a given school may turn out to be less important than any of the following:

- Which categories did they fall short in? (For example, was the one category in which a school did not make AYP ‘reading’ for ‘all students,’ or ‘special education’ students in ‘mathematics?’)
- How far from the target was the school’s result? (For example, if the target was 50 percent meeting standard in reading, did the school have 49 percent or 14 percent meeting the reading standard?)
- How many categories were applicable to a given school and in what percentage of those categories did the school make AYP or not? (For example, a large high school might make it in 13 of 17 applicable categories, and yet appear to be lower performing than an elementary school that only made it in three out of five applicable categories.)

**The Commission finds** that in order for state assistance to be more systematically prioritized, to be more appropriately calibrated case-by-case to a very large number of individual schools, and to employ more accurate and fair descriptions of the status of a school’s progress, graduated levels of assistance must become available **and differentiated labels** for characterizing the status schools not making AYP should be created.

The Commission’s authority to adopt criteria to “identify schools and school districts in need of assistance and those in which significant numbers of students persistently fail to meet state standards”<sup>4</sup> provides the authority to substantially address the policy issue of more appropriate labeling school status. However, OSPI and other entities would be responsible for designing and funding the more varied new forms of state assistance.

Beyond criteria that might be adopted by the Commission to more finely distinguish between levels of need for assistance, it is certain that human judgment will in the end be an important element of the process for deciding which schools need what types of assistance.

---

<sup>4</sup> RCW 28A.655.030(1)(d).

## **b. Focused Assistance Program Interim Results**

Focused assistance was funded initially by the Legislature in the 2001-03 biennial budget. Funding was continued in the 2003-05 budget at a higher level, though the increase in state funds is offset at least somewhat by a comparable loss of federal funds in the current biennium.

Schools were identified in 2001 as potentially eligible to participate in focused assistance if they met at least five out of nine criteria adopted by the Commission for elementary schools or at least five of eight middle school criteria. OSPI considered additional factors in determining which schools would ultimately be offered the opportunity to participate and receive the assistance. The schools that started participating in the first year of focused assistance have completed a year of improvement planning work and have completed the first of two years of implementation. The second and final year of implementation of the plan is taking place this school year.

The Commission analyzed progress made to date for those schools that have participated in the program since 2001 (cohort 1 schools)<sup>5</sup>. It is important to emphasize that the results observable at this time represent an interim progress point, not the final results of the three year program. The review of progress to date included in this report is not intended as and should not be interpreted as a final evaluation of the focused assistance program or of the efforts undertaken at individual schools participating in the program. This analysis is presented in an effort to monitor incremental change that may be occurring that is in some manner associated with the intervention represented by focused assistance. Evaluative conclusions, even tentative ones, should be withheld at least until 2004 WASL results are available and improvement plans have been fully implemented and performance agreements concluded.

To begin to understand any interim impact on student achievement of the focused assistance program, it is necessary to compare progress in these schools with progress made in other schools that were otherwise similar to the focused assistance schools. The comparison group chosen for this analysis was the group of schools that were identified as potentially eligible to participate in 2001 based on having met five of the assistance criteria but which did not enter the program at that time.<sup>6</sup>

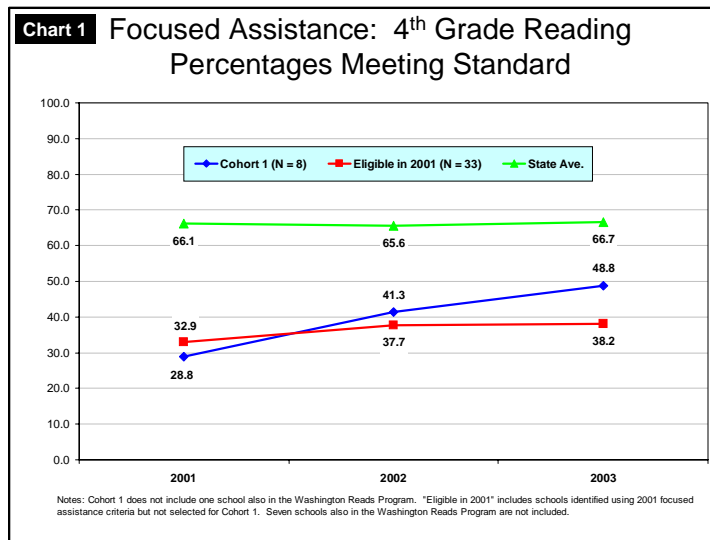
The other reference point supplied for comparison purposes is the progress of the state as a whole during the same period.

---

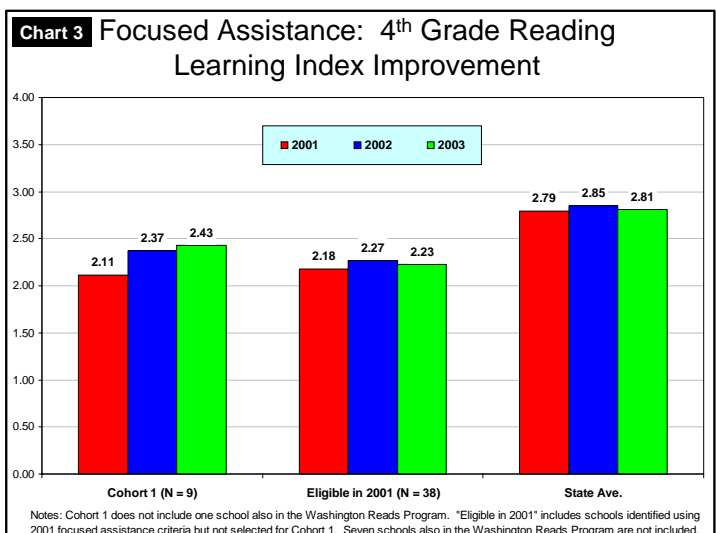
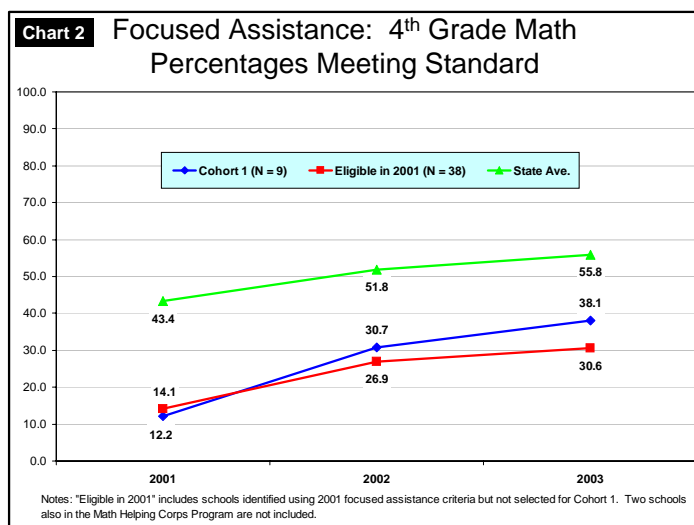
<sup>5</sup> By “focused assistance schools” we mean here only those that have participated since 2001; that is, the “cohort 1” schools only.

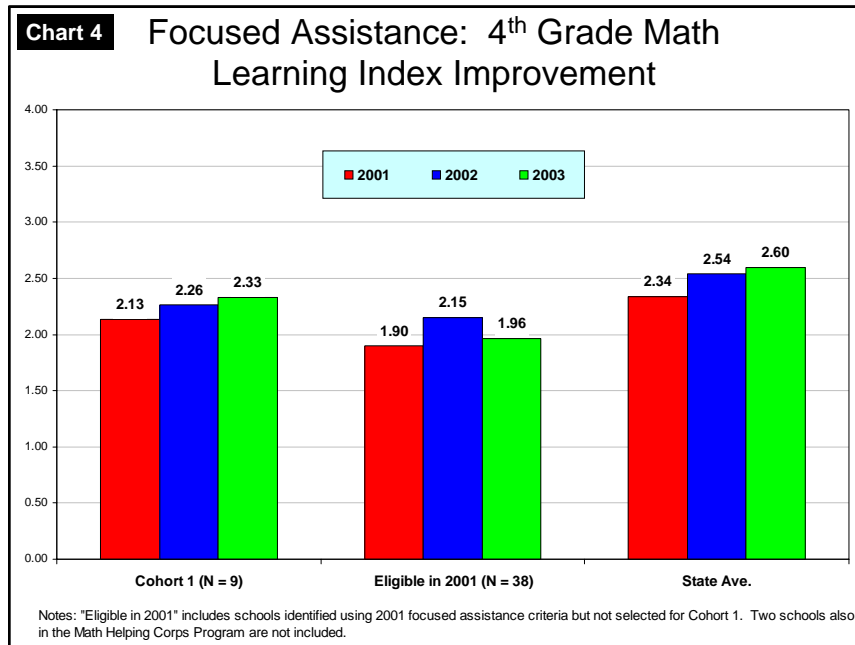
<sup>6</sup> Some schools deemed eligible in 2001 did not initially participate but have subsequently begun participating in the program, in both cohorts 2 and 3. These later cohorts, however, have only just completed the planning year of the program (cohort 2) or just begun the planning phase (cohort 3). Since even cohort 2 schools administered the 2003 WASL before they began the implementation phase, focused assistance should not be expected to have produced any results on the 2003 assessment results. Schools participating in a different intensive assistance program (Washington Reads or Math Helping Corps) were excluded from the analysis to avoid confounding the results of the comparison group of schools.

Focused assistance schools made strong gains in both reading and mathematics in the fourth grade in 2003 compared with their 2001 baseline. In reading, these schools posted 20-percentage point increases in the proportion of students meeting standard. [Chart 1] This result contrasts with both the essentially flat line for the state average as well as the comparatively modest 5-point gains at the comparison schools (that had been identified as eligible for focused assistance in 2001).

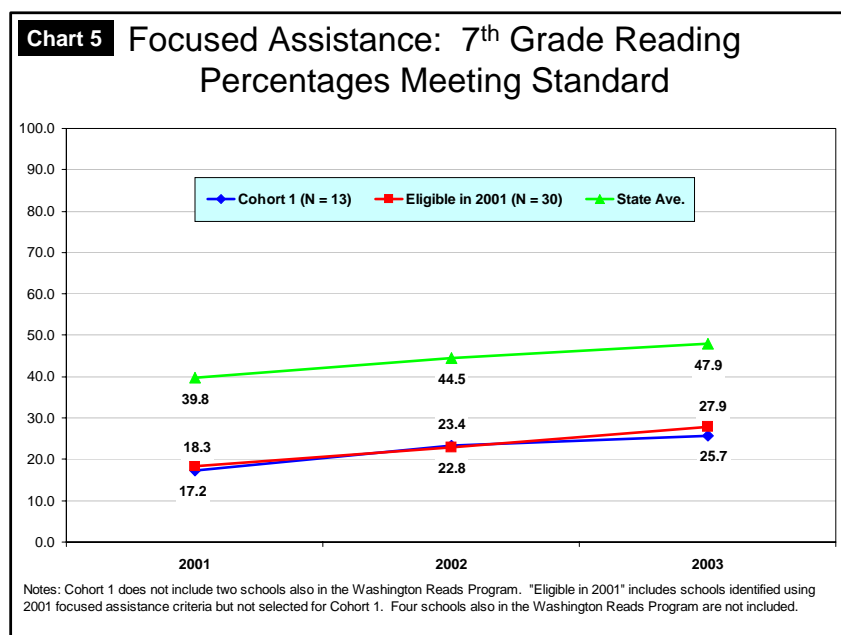


In fourth grade mathematics, the statewide average rose over 12 percentage points, but the focused assistance schools jumped nearly 26 percentage points. [Chart 2] These very impressive results stand out even further when the more comprehensive indicator of the learning improvement index is examined. For example, chart 2 shows that both the focused assistance schools and the comparison schools improved from 2002 to 2003. However, by tracking the more comprehensive index [Charts 3 and 4] we note that the indices dropped for the comparison schools but increased for the focused assistance schools.

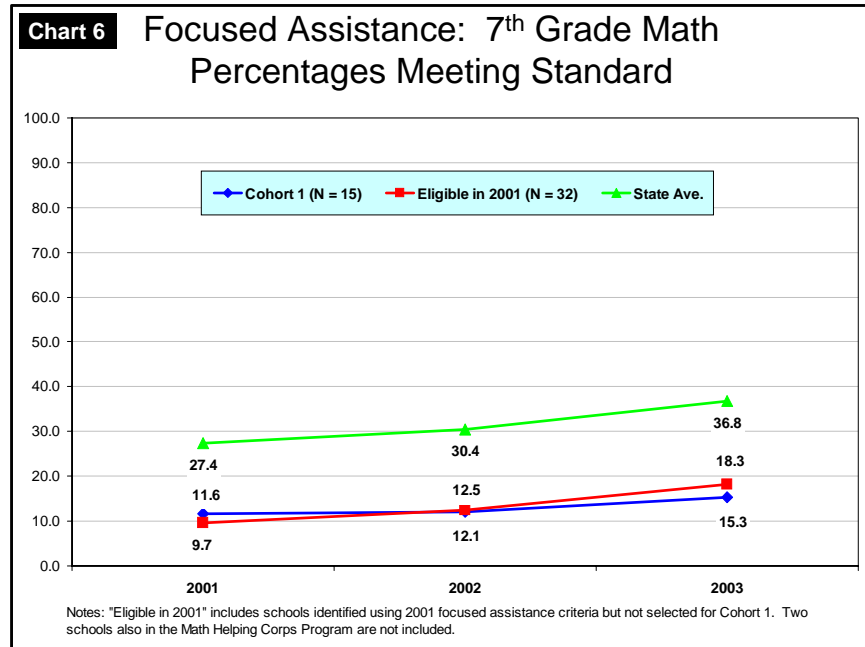




The pattern of interim results for middle schools is different than that for elementary schools. In seventh grade reading, for example, the focused assistance schools saw an 8.5 percentage point jump in students meeting standard from 2001 to 2003. [Chart 5] However, the statewide average gain was nearly as large (8.1 percentage points) and the comparison schools actually had greater gains than the focused assistance schools (9.6 percentage points).



In mathematics at seventh grade, the gain of 3.7 percentage points in focused assistance schools was outstripped both in the comparison schools (8.6 percentage points) and on the statewide average (9.4 percentage points). [Chart 6]



While further research would be necessary to explain these interim results, the interim progress observed in elementary schools is encouraging and such progress is not yet discernable in test scores at the middle school level. Since no high school entered the program in 2001 and only one did so in 2002, student assessment results in high schools cannot be monitored for any potential impacts of the program until 2005.

## 2. New Assessment Development Status

Chart 7 shows the current status of the new assessment development work against the backdrop of assessments already in place by subject and grade level.

Chart 7		Current Status of Assessment November 2003					
	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
<b>Reading</b>	ITBS  Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs done  WASL Pilot Test Construction	WASL Required Since 1998  GLEs done	Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs done  WASL Pilot Test Construction	ITBS  Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs done  WASL Pilot Test Construction	WASL Required Since 2001	Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs done  WASL Pilot Test Construction	WASL Required Since 2001  GLEs done
<b>Writing</b>		WASL Required Since 1998			WASL Required Since 2001		WASL Required Since 2001
<b>Listening</b>		WASL Required Since 1998  Not Funded Beginning 2004			WASL Required Since 2001  Not Funded Beginning 2004		WASL Required Since 2001  Not Funded Beginning 2004
<b>Mathematics</b>	ITBS  Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs being refined  WASL Passage Selection and Item Development	WASL Required Since 1998  GLEs being refined	Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs being refined  WASL Passage Selection and Item Development	ITBS  Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs being refined  WASL Passage Selection and Item Development	WASL Required Since 2001  GLEs being refined	Required by NCLB in 2006  GLEs being refined  WASL Passage Selection and Item Development	WASL Required Since 2001  GLEs being refined
<b>Science</b>			WASL Voluntary 2004  WASL Required 2005			WASL Voluntary 2003  First Operational Reported  WASL Required 2004	WASL Voluntary 2003  First Operational Reported  WASL Required 2004

Chart 8 below summarizes current OSPI plans for completing development of new assessments in reading, mathematics and science over the next several years. These are the assessments that are required under either Washington state law or the NCLB Act.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction WASL Assessment Timeline					
	R = Reading	M = Mathematics	W = Writing	S = Science	
Grade	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
3	-	-	RM	RM	RM
4	RMW	RMW	RMW	RMW	RMW
5	S	S	RMS	RMS	RMS
6	-	-	RM	RM	RM
7	RMW	RMW	RMW	RMW	RMW
8	S	S	RMS	RMS	RMS
9	-	-	-	-	-
10	RMWS	RMWS	RMWS	RMWS	RMWS

Notes	2003-04	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science voluntary participation 8 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade Science required participation
	2004-05	Statewide piloting of Reading and Mathematics for Grades 3, 5, 6, and 8 5 <sup>th</sup> grade Science required participation
	2005-06	Required participation in reading and Mathematics for Grades 3, 5, 6, and 8 for ESEA federal accountability purposes
	2007-08	Grades 5, 8, and 10 Science for ESEA federal accountability purposes

### 3. Accountability System Incomplete, Lacks Consistency

The educational accountability system in Washington was in the middle stages of development when passage of the new federal law substantially arrested its further independent development. [An important point about definitions: House Bill 1209 defined accountability as including at least three types of consequences – assistance, rewards and intervention. It distinguishes accountability from assessment or reporting.]

Washington's state *accountability* system (as distinct from state "assessment" or "reporting" systems) includes voluntary state assistance for low performing schools. Washington has that element at least temporarily in place in the form of two-year spending authority. Performance improvement goals without consequences also were adopted. However, **our state has not enacted rewards for successful schools, nor has it authorized state intervention in persistently low-performing schools or districts.** Beyond a \$100,000 appropriation for plaques to schools meeting their fourth grade reading goals in 2001, the rewards spoken of in House Bill 1209 and in NCLB are not yet authorized in our state.

Since 1994 the federal Title I program has contained provisions regarding district and state intervention in persistently low performing schools, including corrective action and restructuring. However, since Washington state law presently prohibits the state from implementing corrective actions and restructuring, those provisions are not authorized in our state.<sup>7</sup> (Most of the school-level corrective actions and restructuring strategies listed are also steps the state is prohibited from implementing.)

The NCLB Act does impose a *federal* accountability system on those schools and districts in the state that it can reach. Since *some* schools and districts are beyond the reach of Title I, they are substantially beyond the reach of the federal accountability system. The schools and districts within that system are those receiving Title I funds. Section 1111(2) of the NCLB Act reads in part:

"Each State accountability system shall – ... (ii) be the same accountability system the state uses for all public elementary schools and secondary schools or all local educational agencies in the State, except that public elementary schools, secondary schools, and local educational agencies not participating under this part [i.e., receiving Title I funds] are not subject to the requirements of section 1116 [the accountability section] ..."

---

<sup>7</sup> RCW 28A.655.030(1)(e) reads in part, "Beginning no earlier than June 30, 2001, and *after the legislature has authorized* a set of intervention strategies, at the request of the commission, the superintendent shall intervene in the school or district and take *corrective actions*." [Italics added.] The Commission requested from its assistant attorney general a legal opinion on whether the NCLB Act itself may be the source of authority for state implementation of corrective actions. The resulting analysis concludes corrective action under the NCLB Act is authorized only if state law otherwise allows corrective action.

According to data received last year from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 959 public schools in Washington were receiving Title I funds. This represents almost 45 percent of the 2,147 schools in our state. The accountability provisions that do apply to Title I schools and districts still do not include corrective actions and restructuring policies because these forms of accountability have not been authorized by the Washington Legislature. However, schools receiving Title I funds are subject to accountability provisions of public school choice and supplemental services provided in the NCLB Act. Of the 436 schools that did not make adequate yearly progress this year, 213 schools, or 49 percent of the total, were Title I schools and the remaining 223 schools not making AYP are non-Title I schools.

The result of the convergence of the NCLB Act and current Washington state law is an accountability system (consisting primarily of public school choice and supplemental services) that lacks consistency between schools receiving Title I funds and the remaining schools. The same inconsistency exists at the school district level, but is of less practical significance since only about a dozen districts are not receiving Title I funds.

By the fall of 2004 there are almost certain to be a number of school districts in “district improvement.” When a district is in such a status, under the NCLB Act the state must *consider* corrective actions immediately. By the following year, the state *must take* at least one of the corrective actions listed in the federal statute if the district remains in improvement status. In addition, states have an obligation to ensure that districts are adequately implementing corrective actions at the school level for schools in improvement status. The Commission finds that current state law prohibits all of the actions that federal law requires it to consider implementing at the district level in 2004-05 and which federal law requires the state to actually implement as soon as 2005-06.

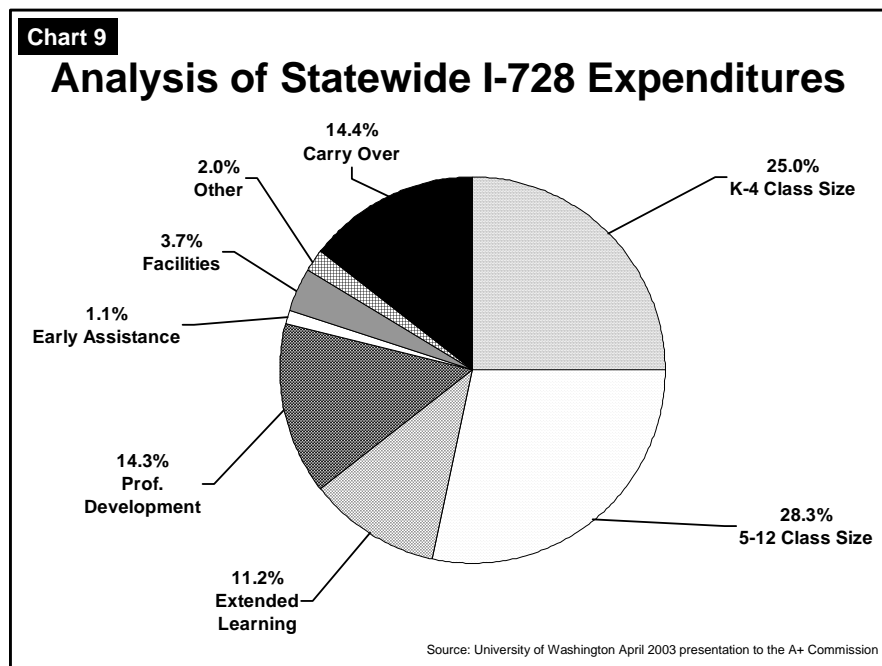
## B. Review of Research Projects Concerning Funding

### 1. I-728 Fund Use

School districts are required to submit reports on how I-728 funds were spent in the previous year to both OSPI and the Commission. While not specifically required to do anything with the reports, the Commission is interested in the impact these targeted funds may have on student achievement.

OSPI funded a research project in 2003 conducted by the University of Washington which analyzed how school districts spent I-728 funds in the 2001-02 school year.<sup>8</sup> The allocation equaled nearly \$184 per student. The researchers also studied in greater detail how and why I-728 funds were used in the way they were in nine school districts – districts chosen to represent a range of districts according to size, location and poverty levels.

Statewide, school district spending was divided among the six allowable uses according to the proportions shown in chart 9 below. The largest portion of funding was focused on class size in grades 5 through 12, followed by class size in grades kindergarten through four. Though it might seem surprising at first to realize that ‘carry over’ was the third largest category of ‘expenditure,’ the Commission understands in many instances districts were waiting for the I-728 funds to accumulate to a critical mass before launching a new program that might not otherwise be fully funded. Most of the rest of the funds were devoted to professional development or extended learning opportunities for students.



<sup>8</sup> For a copy of the report, contact the Commission or Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the College of Education at the University of Washington, through the following website.  
<http://www.educ.washington.edu/COEwebsite/programs/edlps/index.html>

The Commission underscores some of the findings culled by UW researchers from the broad trends. The smallest districts had comparatively stronger emphases in early learning programs pre-kindergarten, in extended learning, and somewhat more than the state average in K-4 class size as well. The largest districts appear to be emphasizing K-4 class size more than was the case on a statewide average basis.

Districts in the Central Puget Sound area showed a disproportionate emphasis on professional development, compared to the state as a whole. School districts in Eastern Washington stressed more than the state as a whole spending in early learning and for facility improvements.

Finally, a striking finding emerged from the analysis by free and reduced-price lunch percentages. Districts with the highest proportion of students participating in the lunch program (above 75 percent) showed a much stronger emphasis on extended learning programs than was the case in other districts. As a corollary finding, these same high poverty districts stood out as the ones least likely to channel their I-728 funds toward K-4 class size reduction.

Researchers did not examine student achievement, arguing that it is too early to gauge how I-728 funds might impact student achievement. The Commission observes it is important too, to consider how much other types of funding may have been reduced by the Legislature, potentially offsetting some of the opportunities represented by the new source of funds through I-728. Nevertheless, the Commission expects to continue monitoring use of I-728 funds and to consider at some point issues of student achievement, since the funds should be expected to have an impact within a few years of starting to flow out to districts.

## **2. Realities of Funding Report**

The League of Education Voters Foundation, and other foundations commissioned a very different sort of research effort on funding this year. The focus of this report, entitled “Realities of Education Funding in Washington State,” was the current status of education funding, and particularly compared with the status of funding ten years ago.<sup>9</sup>

The findings of the report include the following:

While state support for K-12 education has increased due to inflation and increased enrollments over the past decade, per pupil state funding has failed to keep pace with inflation over that period. When inflation is measured by the Seattle-area Consumer Price Index (CPI), the gap in “real” funding between 1992-93 and 2000-01 academic years (the most recent data available in the report) reached \$535, or 9.6 percent, per pupil. Using a more conservative measure of inflation, the United States Implicit Price Deflator (IPD), “real” (inflation adjusted) funding in 2000-01 was actually \$23 greater than 1992-93, after lagging 1993 spending levels throughout the remainder of the 1990s.

---

<sup>9</sup> For a copy of the full report see [http://www.educationvoters.org/realities\\_of\\_funding\\_report.htm](http://www.educationvoters.org/realities_of_funding_report.htm), or contact the Commission or the League of Education Voters Foundation.

Regardless of the inflationary measure used, it is clear that the call for additional educational accountability which sounded in the 1990s has not resulted in any significant “real” increase in state per pupil spending. As a result, Washington’s total per pupil expenditures for K-12 has dropped from just above the national average in the 1992-93 academic year to 91.7 percent of the national average for the 2000-01 academic year.

At the same time that per student spending has slipped, student needs are increasing. Among measures of student need cited in the report are these:

- Since 1993, school districts in Washington have seen a 25 percent increase in enrollment in special needs programs.
- Since 1993, the number of students with limited English proficiency has jumped 59 percent.
- Since 1993, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch has climbed 22 percent.

The report also notes that the state of Washington ranks 34<sup>th</sup> nationally in K-12 education spending per \$1,000 of personal income. In contrast, our state ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in health spending, 12<sup>th</sup> in natural resources spending, 23<sup>rd</sup> in corrections, 27<sup>th</sup> in higher education, and 29<sup>th</sup> in highway spending.

Average teacher salaries in Washington are \$3,000 lower than in Oregon, and \$10,000 lower than in California. Adjusted for cost of living, Seattle-area salaries rank 97<sup>th</sup> in the nation, while Spokane-area salaries rank 51<sup>st</sup> nationwide.

The report notes the obvious, as this Commission does routinely, that expectations for student performance have risen significantly since 1993. We find that the state’s failure to address systemic funding needs of the education system presents a significant and growing barrier to attainment of the higher student expectations, and address this subject in our recommendations.

### **3. Quality Education Model Report**

The Rainier Institute, a Seattle-based think-tank, sponsored a research project intended to develop a potential model for how to revise education funding.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the proposed approach supplies a methodology for determining how much funding would need to be allocated for education in order to provide a quality education, including the attainment of specified levels of student achievement.

In brief, the quality education model described in the report is an attempt to define what would constitute a funding level that would be adequate for providing a quality education. The Commission does not specifically endorse the approach recommended by

---

<sup>10</sup> For a copy of the full report, contact the Commission or The Rainier Institute, or visit <http://www.rainierinstitute.com/issues/education/whatwillittake.html>

the Rainier Institute's Quality Education Model. It does commend the approach described as worthy of further exploration. The concept of the Quality Education Model should be carefully considered as one of the options for revising part of our state's funding system. (See Recommendations 10 and 11 in section III. C.)

The Commission finds the vision of the Quality Education Model to be a strong statement and one to be kept at the forefront of any efforts to revise funding systems. That vision of what a quality education includes emphasizes several important considerations:

- All children enjoying the opportunity to develop their full potential
- Consistent achievement of the essential academic learning requirements
- All students making successful transitions to the next stage of their lives
- Competent and qualified adults
- Partnership with parents and community
- Atmosphere free from fear and intimidation
- An appreciation of diversity
- Pervasive culture of learning, respect and caring.

The model describes three prototype schools (elementary, middle and high schools) that form the basic starting point for ensuring that each school is funded at a level that is adequate for achieving quality. The report describes how those prototype schools differ from what can be done today in Washington public schools, given present funding.

The changes necessary to fund the prototype schools are numerous; a select few examples from the elementary prototype are shown here to highlight major changes implied by the prototype school programs from what is in place today in Washington public schools.

- Raise teacher salaries to the regional average
- Full-day kindergarten at an 18-to-1 student/teacher ratio
- Provide 1 computer per 6 students
- Increase staffing in various areas such as limited-English proficiency, extended learning, office administrative assistance, and in other specialties
- Provide 10 days per year of professional development time
- Increased special education funding to cover actual costs.

There are many other proposed changes in the elementary school prototype, as well as a number of important changes implied by the middle school and high school prototype. Those details are not as important for purposes of this report as is the larger idea – namely, that there is considerable value in having a Washington-based model outlining what adequate funding might look like in our state.

The Rainier Institute project was chaired by Judith Billings and Booth Gardner, and guided by a steering committee of 38 people representing 25 education-related organizations in Washington. The Commission finds great potential value to exist in efforts to build upon this work as our state seeks to answer the question, “what would it mean to adequately fund our public schools?”

The magnitude of such an endeavor must also be underscored. The Washington Quality Education Model implies education funding must be significantly increased. In order to implement prototype schools, education funding would need to increase by from 25 percent up to 39 percent over current, combined state and local funding (depending on school level and whether salary increases are included in the calculation or not).

To put this sizeable increase in perspective, the Education Week rankings of per pupil spending, adjusted for regional cost differences, ranks Washington 41<sup>st</sup> under current spending (2001).<sup>11</sup> Current funding is 88.4 percent of the national average (adjusted for regional cost differences). The quality education model funding level would move Washington to a rank of 19 among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, at just over 108 percent of the national average (adjusted for regional cost differences).

### **C. Stakeholder Retreat**

The two-day meeting in which Commission members and top leaders from education organizations discussed the next ten years of education reform was revealing. The discussions highlighted issues that are among the highest priorities for presidents, executive directors, and other high level representatives of all the leading state organizations focused on education.

The discussions were not preceded by lengthy reviews of research findings or authoritative presentations about the most promising trends in education policy. As such, the Commission does not have the same analytical basis upon which to ground findings in this instance as it has on some other topics.

Even so, the Commission trusts that top leaders from state-level organizations bring both a foundation of data and research to the process of formulating their own views, and employ unusual insight and experience in formulating and articulating their policy suggestions.

The Commission feels confident in the propriety of underlining the importance of a number of crucial themes that emerged in the policy dialogue. [Substantial portions of the meeting summary appear in Appendix B to this report. Please contact the Commission office or visit our website for a copy of the full meeting summary from the June 2-3 Commission and Stakeholder retreat.]

---

<sup>11</sup> Rankings calculated from data reported by Education Week in *Quality Counts 2002: Building Blocks for Success*, p. 86.

## 1. Leadership

One such strongly emphasized theme from the retreat that the Commission commends to the attention of state policy makers is leadership.

The group expressed a need for opportunities to groom appropriately trained leaders in many different roles – from superintendents, principals, school board, parents, teachers, and central office staff to state level leaders.

They suggest this could be done through

- State level academies
- Research on other models of good training opportunities
- Practicum opportunities
- Introductory experiences to see leadership as a function, not a position.
- Better staff ratios to create additional leadership opportunities.

The group suggested we look within existing association structures to groom individuals for the “big picture-next steps” to move to the next level – look at jobs and roles that teacher-leaders hold, and building from that toward district level leadership.

The stakeholder group described many facets of the successful leadership of the future – how to build it and how we’ll recognize it. Just a few highlights follow:

- Principal leaders go through a renewal experience through “leadership academies” every 3 years that support education reform.
- Principals have an outline of an individualized professional growth map.
- Certification is aligned with the leadership skills of teachers, principals, and superintendents.
- A mechanism of performance-based evaluation standards is outlined for evaluators and training is available to support risk taking in leadership.
- North Carolina-like benchmarking is used. Report cards serve to guide public policy and funding decisions.
- Leaders recognize the difference between policies and practices that support “sorting and sifting” versus getting all students to achieve at high standards.
- We want a diverse set of people in place at all levels “visible leaders” – schools, workplaces, employees, superintendents, state leaders.

## **2. Other Topics**

The group also discussed other issues, emphasizing how various aspects of reform can support one another. For example, they also stated, “We want a state governance structure that is integrated and coordinated.” And, “We need an adequate, stable funding mechanism based on performance based system.”

Another stakeholder group focused on issues of teaching quality. The Commission views teaching quality as the cornerstone of improvement efforts. Among the numerous insights articulated by the group, we note the discussion on professional development, and offer the further observation that strong professional development may be most important for teachers in the first stages of their careers. The group stated:

A strong professional development system would provide:

- Induction system
- Mentors for the first two years of service
- A redesigned Professional Certificate that accounts for time and expense and fine-tuning
- Ongoing learning that is:
  - a. Site based
  - b. Job embedded
  - c. Continuous
  - d. Data driven
  - e. Compensated
  - f. Accountable

Teacher Leadership requires creating career development paths such as mentor, curriculum developer, staff developer, school improvement facilitator and master teacher.

## **D. Achievement Gap**

The Commission has consistently focused on issues relating to the achievement gap. This work has included sponsoring research directly and reviewing research and analyses conducted and presented by other organizations. The Commission’s focus on the achievement gap continued over the past year. The most important examples of research and other activities the Commission has reviewed in the past year are summarized below.

### **1. Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) Task Force**

Over the course of 2001 and 2002 a Task Force of school directors reviewed research and discussed policy issues that might help close the achievement gap. The final report of the task force, chaired by Connie Fletcher, Board President of Issaquah School District and past president of WSSDA, was presented to the Commission this spring.

The Task Force recommends that school boards and other state and local officials re-examine how funds are allocated, stressing:

- Alignment of spending with needs and effective programs
- Considering a weighted student formula
- Basing budget decisions on a strategic plan
- Concentrating new resources on students with greatest need.

The report also recommends a focus on quality teaching and teacher assignment policies, including the following:

- Negotiate authority to assign the best teachers to the neediest students
- Assign staff by endorsement
- Recruit highly qualified minority teachers
- Limit use of aides for instruction.

In addition, the WSSDA task force calls for:

- Providing a rigorous curriculum for all students
- Shifting away from the pull-out instructional model for students in English language learner programs
- Engaging students in creating learning environments free of racism
- Using extended learning opportunities to accelerate low-achieving students.

Finally, the recommendations concerning assessment and accountability advocate steps such as these:

- Setting goals for improvement and for meeting standards
- Establishing measurable goals for each school and the district for closing the gap
- Establishing comprehensive data management systems, and
- Evaluating the effectiveness of programs.

The Commission commends the School Directors' Association for energetically addressing the achievement gap and developing comprehensive approaches to tackling the problem, particularly at the local level. We find that the WSSDA report includes a focus on key policy issues that need greater attention at both the state and local levels to help close the achievement gap.

## **2. Federal Way School District Efforts**

The Federal Way School District is a local community where a number of the achievement gap issues discussed by the State School Directors' Association have been explored and addressed. The Commission received a detailed presentation from the superintendent of Federal Way schools, Dr. Tom Murphy. In Federal Way, the district has reached out to and involved a diverse cross-section of the community.

The district has established measurable goals for reducing the achievement gap, and is reporting results achieved toward the goals. For example, the district set a 10 percent improvement goal for students in the free and reduced-price lunch program in reading and math. The goals were met in 2002 for grades 4 and 7 but not grade 10. (Results for 2003 were not available at the time of the presentation.)

They also set goals to reduce the number of students in level one on reading and math from 2001 to 2002. That goal was met for grade 4 math and grade 7 reading and math, but not for grade 4 reading and grade 10 reading and math. Goals for 2003 for students in English language learner programs call for a reduction by 10 percent of those scoring in level one for reading and writing.

The district has set a goal of reducing by 10 percent per year the number of serious discipline infractions.

The district has also launched staff training efforts to better equip teachers to be effective in classrooms with a variety of types of diversity – diversity of language, culture, disabilities, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc. They have a goal to increase parental satisfaction by 10 percent, and to form at least 35 collaborative partnerships with community agencies and organizations.

Federal Way School District leaders are re-examining allocation of funds, offering early intervention and extended learning opportunities for struggling students, setting promotion requirements, and looking carefully at the research-proven results of existing and potentially new program models.

In summary, the Commission finds much to applaud in the strategic approach of this local community to close the achievement gap and encourages its continued efforts to make further progress and share its approaches with other communities across the state.

### **3. Early Learning Targeting the Gap**

The Commission learned this year about a new wave of programs being used in many other districts across the state as strategies for addressing the achievement gap – namely, early childhood education programs. The programs are not new, but for school districts to provide such programs to students not qualified for special education is a quite new trend.

As research conducted by the Economic Opportunity Institute shows, many school districts are offering programs from full-day kindergarten to pre-school for 3- and 4-year-olds, using a variety of fund sources. Initiative-728 is a particularly important fund source for these programs, and is partly the reason so many of the programs are so new.

This focus is spurred in part by a growing awareness of research indicating high quality preschool experience promotes greater long term academic success and reduced rates of juvenile delinquency and teen pregnancy. (For instance, there is a 36 percent four-year college attendance rate for students who had pre-school compared to 14 percent rates for those who did not; 35 percent of chronic offenders at age 27 did not have pre-school experience, compared to just 7 percent of such offenders who did.)

Research indicates these types of improved academic and other life-changing results are even more dramatic for low-income, minority, and English language learning children. This is one important reason for the expanding focus on early learning as achievement gap reduction strategies. The National Association for the Education of Young Children finds there is a five-year difference in literacy skills among entering kindergartners. Some are already independent readers, while others have the skills typical of a 3-year-old.

Children not at least modestly skilled in reading by the end of third grade are unlikely to graduate from high school.

Full- or extended-day kindergarten programs are universally available in 27 districts. A number of other programs are targeted on the basis of need. Pre-kindergarten programs include a wide variety of approaches, from pre-school to services such as teachers mentoring pre-school and child care providers (Bremerton), to 6-week summer programs for at-risk incoming kindergartners (Longview), to a wide range of services from birth to five years of age with the literacy component of pre-K curriculum aligned with elementary school curriculum (Bellevue) and many others.

While many of the programs are too new to evaluate results with much confidence, Edmonds School District has evaluated their full-day kindergarten program. They report full-day or extended-day kindergartners have 45 percent higher rates of letter-sound association in first grade and 37 percent higher rates of understanding the meaning of words when compared with half-day kindergarten results.

As programs continue long enough to permit evaluation of results and the impact on student learning, a specific focus on the achievement gap must be included to gauge the effectiveness of early learning **as an achievement gap reduction strategy**.

## **E. Certificate of Mastery<sup>12</sup> Implementation Legislation**

At the conclusion of the third special legislative session in 2003, the final gavel fell with House Bill 2195 still awaiting approval. As a result, the state missed another opportunity to begin putting in motion a comprehensive and coherent plan to implement the certificate of mastery. This critical legislation would have directly authorized and funded activities that are essential to implementing this high school graduation requirement, including the following:

- Students who do not initially score high enough on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade assessment would be granted two opportunities each year to re-take relevant portions of the WASL; and
- OSPI would develop one or more alternative means for students to demonstrate mastery – an alternative to the WASL but of comparable rigor – after a student has taken the WASL at least twice.

The legislation would have launched other important work as well.

- The Commission would have been required to review cut scores needed to obtain a certificate;
- An appeal process would have had to be considered;
- Recommendations would have been developed for how to appropriately apply the certificate requirements to students receiving special education and English language proficiency services; and
- School districts would have been required to prepare a plan for each student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or beyond who had not yet met standard.

The requirements to obtain the re-named “certificate of academic achievement” would have been placed in statute (obviating the need for rules adopted by the State Board of Education) specifying that reading, writing and mathematics would be required for the class of 2008 and science as well for the class of 2010.

Listening would have been removed from current requirements in rule, and social studies, arts, and health and fitness would have been excluded from the certificate.

The requirement that the State Board determine whether the high school assessment is sufficiently reliable and valid would have been eliminated.

---

<sup>12</sup> The Commission recognizes that legislation debated in the 2003 session included a change of the name from “certificate of mastery” to “certificate of academic achievement.” While not intending to suggest the name should or should not be changed, until a name change is approved, we use the term in current statute.

Finally, the bill would have directed OSPI to review and prioritize the state content standards, identify the grade level expectations to be assessed, and study or consider a number of additional steps, including use of value-added information, earlier return of assessment results to schools and families, and alignment of content standards with assessments in reading, writing and science.

This legislation would have given us the coherent plan for implementation that has not been developed thus far. These steps and the provision of opportunities for targeted assistance for students scoring below the required level have been vital in other states; they are critical in ours as well. The bill had strong support from a broad coalition of educational and business community advocates.

Legislative action approving the bill as soon as possible in the 2004 session is imperative. Students, their families and their teachers must have a clear understanding of the rules under which students will be able to earn a diploma in 2008 and beyond. They must know the rules when they start high school as freshmen – a watershed event which occurs in the fall of 2004.

### **III. Recommendations**

Last year the Commission reported that federal legislation enacted in January of 2002 was an important new feature of the educational policy landscape throughout our nation. As was said then, the full import of the new law, known as the No Child Left Behind Act, will not be known for some time. This is still true, notwithstanding important developments in 2003.

Those developments include completion of U.S. Department of Education guidelines, the submission of state accountability plans as part of the applications for funds, as well as the Department of Education's responses to each of the state applications and accountability plans.

The purpose of the act, to eliminate the achievement gap, has been widely acclaimed. The impact of the act has already been significant. The requirement to achieve progress with each of eight discrete groups of students, as well as for students on an overall average basis, has sent the powerful message that the failure of even one child is unacceptable. Yet, as we stated last year, in order for "No Child Left Behind" to become more than a slogan, a fundamental shift is necessary in how our schools are focused, organized, managed, and funded.

The challenge laid down by the federal act is to ensure each and every student is proficient in reading and math, in each of grades 3 through 8 and 10 by the end of the 2013-14 school year. This challenge is all the more daunting when considering that Washington state set among the most rigorous proficiency standards of any state in the nation.

As if that enormous challenge were not enough ... we face an even greater challenge, a challenge at once more profound, more immediate, more momentous.

The class of 2008 – a conscripted army of some 80,000 pioneering young people who are right now enrolled in 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms all across our state – will have to clear this high hurdle if they hope to graduate from high school. These legions of students and their families have a tremendous stake in what our educators, policymakers and our entire state does – or fails to do – in the immediate future.

Of course, the certificate of mastery graduation requirement does not represent the sole factor determining the fate of these students. But the decisions of our state's policymakers and educators will have a powerful impact on their futures – the standard represented by the certificate of mastery will launch many to a lifetime of achievements, and may for others be followed by further setbacks and disappointments. How these young souls respond to the imposition of the standard will steer the course of their lives.

## **A. Vision**

Last year the Commission called upon leaders from all sectors of our state to define a vision of what our children need to achieve to lead productive and satisfying lives. Much more work remains to be done. More than ever, our state needs a shared vision of what Washington public schools must strive to accomplish. We must therefore renew the call to create a compelling vision of education pre-school through college in Washington.

### **Recommendation 1: Leaders must build informed commitment to a powerful vision of learning to prepare all students for success in our 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy and society.**

By the time our children are ready to raise their own families, what economic opportunities will be available to them? What strengths and skills and tools will they need to seize those opportunities? We must venture our sharpest insight into what our future state's economy, environment and social fabric will require. We must decide what it means to be a full-fledged citizen in our state, a productive participant in our economy, and a contributing member of our families, neighborhoods and communities. The vision must represent a consensus of how we believe our children must be equipped when they graduate so they will be ready to create a bright future for themselves and our state.

During the site visits to various states organized last year by the Commission, North Carolina emerged as an inspiring model of visionary leadership. In 2000, after recording the greatest improvement in national assessment results achieved by any state in the nation through the decade of the 1990s, North Carolinian leaders did something extraordinary. They decided that being 'most improved' was not their aspiration. They declared their intention to make North Carolina schools the best in the nation by 2010.

For a school system regarded as achieving in the 'middle of the pack' this is an audaciously ambitious goal. But if they achieve the goal or even come close, a major reason will be the degree to which top leaders in the state have committed to one another that each will give its all toward the shared goal.

The vision developed in North Carolina is firmly benchmarked in relation to other states. The objectives are measurable. The indicators are designed to directly monitor progress. The entire endeavor is expressed in terms both of results sought and actions related to the expected results.

The Commission is undertaking an effort that is in some ways analogous to a part of North Carolina's visionary project. While details have not been decided, the project will set forth a clear vision that will be benchmarked to other states and will begin tracking progress toward making the vision come alive.

This effort will be of limited value, however, unless it represents a vision that commands allegiance among not only leaders but people in every corner of our education system and our state. It can be of great value as a catalyst and as a support structure for broader and deeper efforts to forge a mutual commitment to realize the vision of a bright future in Washington.

## **B. Accountability**

Washington's landmark education reform law, House Bill 1209, was consciously and admittedly incomplete. The 1993 blueprint outlined steps for creating academic content standards and assessments, but envisioned – with one vital exception – designing the accountability system at a later date. The original law included a policy that would one day hold students accountable for their learning. Student accountability hinges upon the requirement to obtain a certificate of mastery before graduating from high school. The certificate is to be granted upon successful completion of the high school assessment. By rule, the State Board of Education has determined this requirement shall apply first to the class of 2008, whose members will take the test in 2006.

### **Recommendation 2: Implement graduation requirements under the certificate of mastery.**

Ten years after enactment of the student accountability policy, serious plans and concerted actions are needed. In order to implement the skill-based graduation requirement effectively and fairly, decisive steps must now be taken.

Those decisive steps must be animated by a powerful drive to help all students successfully complete the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state assessment in 2006. Just two years after the conclusion of the approaching legislative session, students in the class of 2008 will take the test required for graduation. In the spring of 2003, approximately one in three 10<sup>th</sup> grade students met standard in each of the subtests for reading, writing, listening and mathematics. Intensive capacity-building work must be done. While the students' moment of truth arrives in a few short years, the policymakers' moment of truth is now arrived.

Last session the Legislature worked long and hard on measures that would have initiated the serious work of implementing the certificate of mastery graduation requirement. The budget included funds to begin creating opportunities for students to re-take the test if they have not passed, and to begin creating an alternative means of demonstrating mastery. Those funds, however, have been lost for now because the policy measures were not enacted.

Further delay is not an option. Legislative action this session is imperative if our education system is to have any chance of fairly and effectively imposing this vital new graduation requirement as currently envisioned and on the schedule presently decided.

**The Commission therefore recommends, in the strongest terms, that the Legislature enact and the Governor approve policies accompanied with funding necessary to implement the certificate of mastery graduation requirement.** Funding already identified in the approved state budget is an adequate start. These resources must be released, and policies must be enacted that include opportunities for re-takes, development of alternative means of demonstrating mastery, and authorization to consider other policy options such as appeals and rules for special populations such as students with disabilities and English language learners.

We also encourage the State Board of Education and the OSPI to take whatever steps possible within the current statutory framework to implement the certificate of mastery requirement in a thoughtful and equitable manner.

**Recommendation 3: Enact accountability system policies in the 2004 legislative session.**

Student accountability alone does not constitute an accountability system for Washington public schools. Any system that holds students accountable but fails to hold adults accountable is inevitably both unfair and ineffective. In order to stay on schedule for implementing a certificate of mastery high school graduation requirement for the class of 2008, the state will need to notify incoming freshmen students in the fall of 2004 what they will need to do to graduate in the spring of 2008. The certificate of mastery timeline suggests the 2004 session is the deadline for when the state should be prepared to describe how it will hold adults as well as students accountable.

The necessity of enacting the system accountability legislation in 2004 is further underlined by federal requirements under the NCLB Act (described below and in the findings section of this report).

The Commission stands ready to assist the Legislature in its deliberations regarding the implementation of necessary accountability measures for Washington schools. As a foundation for those deliberations, the Commission offers recommendations four through six below as more specific ideas for consideration by the Legislature and the Governor in following through on this general recommendation.

**Recommendation 4: Help for struggling schools must be the heart of the accountability system. Funding for focused assistance should increase. State assistance tools must be expanded and become more varied and flexible.**

The Legislature previously accepted the Commission's recommendation to fund a pilot program of focused assistance for some of Washington's most struggling schools. Based on the results and learning gained through this program, the Legislature should continue to provide resources for assistance that can be targeted at the specific needs of the

specific schools. Focused assistance should not remain voluntary for the local school and district; instead, OSPI should be authorized to require persistently struggling schools to participate in focused assistance.

In addition to focused assistance, the Legislature, Governor and OSPI should develop a variety of other forms of assistance to schools and school districts in need of assistance. The state is serving 25 schools per year through focused assistance. By September, 2004, there will likely be hundreds of schools and scores of school districts declared to be in “improvement” status under federal law; with that “school improvement” or “district improvement” designation comes an obligation of the state to provide assistance if it is requested by the districts.

While the focused assistance process may be well suited to the schools that struggle the most, the Commission believes the state will need to have at its disposal a wider range of assistance tools than just the focused assistance process. The assistance options must be more differentiated, and more flexible so they can be better tailored to the circumstances of a wide variety of schools. Whereas focused assistance is provided for schools, the state will have to begin assisting districts as well, beginning in the 2004-05 school year. By next year, the number of districts needing state assistance under federal adequate yearly progress provisions could jump from 0 to as much as 125, and the number of schools needing assistance could jump from 25 to as high as 436 – assistance which will need to be funded. Less intensive and more varied forms of assistance will be necessary because of this huge increase in numbers and because of the attendant diversity of needs that comes with the greatly increased numbers.

In keeping with the necessity of more differentiated assistance, new and more differentiated terminology is needed to accurately and fairly characterize a much larger universe of schools. The terminology the NCLB Act gives us is not by itself precise enough to convey the true status of all our schools in all their complexity. The federal program places all school performance in one of two categories – adequate or not adequate. This either-or classification is too blunt an instrument for informing parents and the community how well things may be progressing at each of our schools.

**Recommendation 5: The Legislature must enact legislation in 2004 authorizing progressive state intervention in persistently low performing schools and school districts.**

Progressive intervention was a key component of the Commission’s previous recommendations to the Legislature and has now become a principle component of the federal statute. State intervention has been used rarely in other states, and we assume that it would be similarly infrequent in Washington. But such steps must be permissible as a last resort if performance is persistently low and is not improving at an acceptable rate.

The Commission recommends the Legislature grant specific authority for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement progressive state intervention in persistently low performing schools and school districts, as mandated by the federal “No Child Left Behind” Act. Only those provisions of the federal law which are “consistent with state law” can be implemented. RCW 28A.655.030(1)(e) bars state implementation of corrective actions by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction until after the Legislature has authorized a set of intervention strategies (which it has not yet done). The removal of this statutory restriction is the minimum step necessary to comply with the provisions of the “No Child Left Behind” Act. The Commission recommends that the Legislature go beyond this minimum step by explicitly authorizing OSPI to implement intervention strategies consistent with the federal law.

**Recommendation 6: Incentives should be included as a vital part of a balanced accountability system.**

Research funded by the Commission last year demonstrates the potential for improving student achievement through well-designed school-based performance awards. The Commission was also impressed by the impact incentives appeared to have had in North Carolina, the most improved state in the 1990s. The Commission intends to continue analyzing the potential of school-based incentive programs for improving student performance in our state.

The Commission believes the state should also provide other forms of recognition, as the Legislature did one time only in 2001. The state should continually celebrate the successes and achievements of students, schools and districts.

**Recommendation 7: The state should promote and support National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.**

National Board certification is a voluntary program which includes a rigorous assessment of effective teaching strategies that are appropriate for each teacher’s specific student population. National Board certified teachers must prove that their instructional approaches and methods effectively improve student learning. Bonuses and other incentives to earn certification are cost effective strategies for recognizing, rewarding and improving the quality of teaching in our schools. North Carolina, which offers a 12 percent bonus to nationally certified teachers, has promoted this teacher quality strategy so well that approximately 4.5 percent of all teachers in the state have achieved the certification.

Washington has provided funding for bonuses for several years now. However, the Commission recommends the following changes to how certification currently is recognized.

First, the Legislature should adopt a settled policy, through legislation, that recognizes and rewards teachers who reach National Board certification; the bonus program should be removed from the budgetary arena. The bonuses provided through the budget are necessarily limited to a two-year period, and therefore are more vulnerable to revision than a statutory program would be. Currently, the bonus amounts are capped for individual teachers at \$3,500 per year, and the overall program is capped as well, which could reduce the bonus amount even further depending on the number of qualified teachers. Why would a National Board teacher work to increase the number of nationally certified teachers if they are punished financially for doing so? For the bonus to work as intended, this sort of unpredictability must be removed from the program. Teachers who are considering undertaking the time-consuming, rigorous, expensive and arduous process of seeking certification from the National Board will be more effectively encouraged to go through the yearlong assessment process if they have confidence that the result will be significant and last for the duration of their certificate, which is ten years.

Second, the Commission recommends the Legislature consider developing policy strategies intended to achieve an equitable distribution of National Board-certified teachers and to maximize the extent to which certified teachers share their knowledge and skill with other educators. Some schools with few or no National Board-certified teachers may have very great academic needs or large numbers of at-risk students. Conversely, some high performing schools could find themselves with comparatively high proportions of National Board-certified teachers, whether because the district encourages it, provides financial and other supports to boost the number of their teachers earning the certificate, or for other reasons. These goals could be accomplished through strategies such as two-tiered bonus systems, with a basic bonus for all, and a higher bonus to be awarded based on criteria related to equitable distribution of certificate holders and how far the certified teacher is willing to go in offering in-service professional development, mentoring and/or coaching for colleagues.

Third, the state should explore creation of partnerships with school districts under which local school systems would assist in encouraging and funding the effort to increase the number of teachers earning national board certification. Over the past few years, Washington State has been the recipient of a Gates and Stewart Foundations grant (the Washington Initiative for National Certification). With the grant in the final year, funding for the application fees (\$2,300 per teacher) is cut, leaving many teachers without the resources to improve their practices through this certification process. Since the teacher is the most important factor in determining school success for each student, don't we owe it to the students to support the teachers in their improvement process?

**Recommendation 8: The creation of charter schools in Washington should be evaluated as one strategy for facilitating school improvement and complying with requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.**

The Commission recognizes the potential of charter schools<sup>13</sup> as one in a series of comprehensive school improvement strategies to be utilized in persistently low-performing schools. Charter schools could also provide students and their families with enhanced opportunities for school choice, in keeping with the requirements contained in the federal act. The experience in other states indicates that charter schools also provide opportunities for building stronger ties between schools and the community. Finally, it should be noted that authorization of charter schools in Washington State would provide access to additional federal funding in the form of competitive grants to support charter school formation.

**Recommendation 9: Design a method of value-added reporting to track the progress of individual students.**

The federal NCLB Act requires states to annually test students in reading and math in each of grades 3 through 8 and 10. The OSPI is in the process of implementing a secure student identifier system that will permit teachers and principals to monitor the annual improvement of individual student assessment results.

The conjunction of these two developments – annual testing in each of grades 3-8 and the secure student identifier – presents the opportunity to use what is called value-added assessment which involves measuring test score gains made in a year's time at the level of each individual student. (OSPI reports that assignment of state identifiers has been completed, that the first monthly transmissions of data in the core student record system from local officials to OSPI have begun, and that the 2004 WASL will be the first test score which the state will have the capacity to relate to the student identifier.)

Last year the Commission expressed its strong support of further research into using value-added assessment in Washington, including offering financial incentives to districts (such as Seattle Public Schools) that already have the annual student assessment data required to conduct value-added analyses of district and school performance.<sup>14</sup> Since Washington is required by No Child Left Behind to implement annual assessments in grades 3-8 for reading and math by 2005, it will be possible to perform statewide value-

---

<sup>13</sup> Charter schools are alternative public schools that are given a high degree of operating flexibility and independence in exchange for a high degree of accountability for improved student performance. Forty of the 50 states authorize charter schools, and there are more than 3,000 charter schools, serving some 700,000 students across the country.

<sup>14</sup> Seattle Public Schools currently uses a value-added assessment system at the current cost of one dollar per student per year.

added assessments of individual districts and schools beginning in 2006. It should be emphasized that examining assessment results from a value-added perspective does not involve creating a new assessment system – rather it involves reporting and analyzing results from current assessments, and the additional grade level assessments, in new ways.

The Commission notes that an important provision of House Bill 2195, a bill debated last session, would have required reporting reading and mathematics results in 2006 in a format showing parents and teachers the academic gain acquired by a student from one year to the next. This language from the bill demonstrates substantial legislative interest, that the Commission shares, in using value-added assessment information for the benefit of students, parents and teachers.

The Commission believes an assessment and accountability system focused on the level of learning individual children acquire each year – rather than sequential groups of different children – is a helpful additional approach to monitoring the degree of improvement that occurs over time in a school system. Value-added approaches are helpful from the standpoints of policy, fairness and validity. Individual student data provides educators with much more powerful tools for improving student learning – the policy objective of the whole of education reform. The validity of year-to-year test score comparisons are greatly enhanced when the same population is compared at two points in time, as opposed to when two different populations are compared at two different points in time.

The NCLB Act, while it requires the annual testing that helps make value-added approaches feasible, does not allow value-added approaches in determining adequate yearly progress. Neither does the NCLB Act prohibit states from using value-added approaches for purposes other than determining adequate yearly progress. As a result, while the opportunity is soon to be presented for using value-added approaches, doing so would be, and should be understood as, a parallel process for examining test scores and obtaining information about the level of improvement occurring in schools and for individual children. Value-added assessment and accountability systems cannot be used *instead of* adequate yearly progress determinations, which are based on successive (and different) cohorts of students. By 2006 and beyond, however, value-added approaches can be, and the Commission recommends should be, employed for the benefit of students and educators *in addition to* the adequate yearly progress approach required under the NCLB Act.

## C. Funding

In deep and complex ways, funding is closely tied with accountability. Policy considerations; the dynamics of legislative compromise; simple fairness; and the plain logic of how to accomplish in tens of thousands of classrooms the daunting objectives conceived in Olympia – all these factors suggest as much.

We repeat the admonition with which this report opens. We must accept no excuses. There is no excuse to any longer avoid the twin issues of funding and accountability. We must also abandon the fantasy that we can have Cadillac education on a Chevrolet budget. As noted in the findings of this report, Washington state currently ranks somewhere between 34<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> in funding per student, depending on the details of the method of measurement. By contrast, Washington's expectations for student performance rank very near the highest in the nation.<sup>15</sup>

**Recommendation 10: The state must undertake a searching re-evaluation of what adequate education funding would be, including how accountability policies will be funded.**

The Commission does not advocate simply allocating larger amounts of funding in the same ways in which funds are allocated today. We are not aware of credible data which demonstrates that more money distributed in the same way will necessarily lead to the desired student performance. We recognize that our recommendations will require funding to implement. In view of that, we do advocate re-structuring funding systems to give our schools the best chance to maximize impact on student learning.

We do not propose a specific solution to the problem, though we believe the approach of benchmarking relative to other states has merit. To offer specific solutions would be premature until a strong foundation has been laid. The funding review should focus on how to enhance and stabilize funding, and how to align funding with the student performance expectations described in the essential academic learning requirements. Research and development work should occur over approximately the next two years, with implementation beginning soon thereafter.

This is essentially the same recommendation made last year. Although proposals were placed before the Legislature, no action was taken on those proposals. We renew the call this year to re-structure funding systems. Though the recommendation is essentially the same, this year the recommendation rests on a stronger foundation because we have learned much from the recent work of other organizations, work which is discussed in the findings of this report.

---

<sup>15</sup> According to The Princeton Review, just two states set higher proficiency standards than Washington; four states and Washington tie for the ranking of third most rigorous standards; and 41 states have set lower proficiency standards than Washington. *Testing the Testers 2003*, p. 35. This analysis relied upon mathematics in grade 8 (grade 7 in the case of Washington).

We believe that the state's difficult fiscal situation of the last couple of years itself demonstrates the need to review all the issues involved in how and how much we invest in education. Many ideas could be explored in the review, including the idea of a source of dedicated funding.

The Commission foresees the need for additional direct funding for a number of purposes – new reading and math assessments in four additional grades; focused assistance for many additional schools and for the first time for school districts as well; assistance in non-Title I schools that do not have access to federal funds; enormous challenges in helping students in special programs reach proficiency, such as students in special education programs and English language learners; addressing the achievement gap; developing alternative means of demonstrating mastery; and WASL grade 10 re-take opportunities for students not yet qualified to graduate.

Science testing and graduation requirements are just around the corner as well. This further challenge cannot be met without substantially improving the science curriculum across all the grades. This will require new and aligned materials, training and support of various kinds. These and other new hurdles will carry fiscal impact. These new hurdles further underscore the need to address funding issues too long ignored.

Accountability alone will not generate the *capacity* to boost teaching quality, to build school leadership, or to offer students additional learning time – all of which are necessary to eliminate the achievement gap and help all students earn a diploma that signifies a defined level of knowledge and skill. Simply demanding the improved student achievement we desire will not produce it.

The Commission believes our education funding systems are as much in need of a paradigm shift as are our educational management, governance and instructional approaches. Children with dramatically different needs (such as poverty, language barriers and disabilities) should not generate funding at the same level or in the same way.

Teaching quality is the most critical element in any improvement strategy. Improving the quality of teaching – profound and transformational improvements, not incremental or piecemeal adjustments – will require aligned strategies for more focused teacher preparation, job-embedded and school-based professional development, more intensive induction and mentoring strategies for new teachers, significant incentives for higher performance, and compensation levels befitting the profession of teaching and commensurate with the importance of high quality teaching for our state's future. All this takes resources.

These are some of the most crucial elements necessary to achieve shared accountability. Teachers, administrators, students, parents, state policy-makers, business leaders and members of the community all have a role to play and ought to have a level of accountability for carrying out their responsibilities to achieve the state's paramount duty.

**Recommendation 11: The state should restore full funding of Initiatives 728 and 732.**

Washingtonians are aware our state has faced a perfect storm of unusually severe budget constraints, revenue shortfalls, and growing service needs over the past few years. While we understand the decisions made this year to suspend I-732 cost-of-living salary increases for educational employees and to freeze I-728 funding at current levels were made with reluctance, we remain frustrated over the lack of progress. The urgent priorities discussed throughout this report underline the need to return to the funding schedule required under I-728 in the very near future. Funding I-732 is urgent as well, since each additional year that teachers and other staff are denied a cost-of-living salary increase represents both a symbolic loss of support from state leaders and a tangible loss of compensation that compounds over time and may never be made up through an entire career. We must do better by our students and teachers, and soon, if we are truly serious about achieving our objectives in education reform.

**D. Governance Reform**

**Recommendation 12: The Legislature should initiate an inclusive process to reform the educational governance structure of our state.**

Again, this recommendation renews the call made last year to address governance issues in light of the lack of any action in the 2003 session to recognize and respond to the problem. The June retreat organized by the Commission for stakeholders and commissioners reiterates the widely shared belief that governance reform is needed.

If anything has changed since last year, it would be that there is a growing recognition that simply re-shuffling K-12 governance structures and authority promises much more limited benefit than a more comprehensive P-16 focus in governance reform holds.

For example, the grassroots organization that sponsored Initiative 728, a group and project known as K-12 2000 and later as the League of Education Voters, and its allied Foundation now focus decisively beyond the traditional boundaries of the K-12 common school system. The Commission and Stakeholder retreat of June, 2003 included a strong focus on the concept of P-16 as an approach to governance and broader issues.

Research referred to in the findings section of this report also underscores this, emphasizing the vital role of pre-kindergarten early learning and care programs for addressing the academic achievement gap we find in K-12 standardized test results. Of course, higher education systems prepare future teachers and administrators, as well as parents, business leaders and policy-makers. Governance reform that focuses P-16 has the potential to enforce the stronger cooperation and closer collaboration across educational sectors that will be vital to achieving our goals for student achievement and economic vitality.

In last year's report, we observed that a 1997 University of Washington and national management and planning consulting firm study concluded that, "Washington has evolved an educational governance system in which responsibility for formulating, funding and implementing policy is blurred, fragmented and sometimes overlapping." The report went on to note this makes it "difficult for the public to understand who is in charge or who should be held accountable for public education." Since 1997, our state created the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission to replace the Commission on Student Learning (which was allowed to sunset), and formed yet another state agency, the Professional Educator Standards Board, with jurisdiction over a portion of state education functions.

A cosmetic remodel is not worth anyone's time and effort to accomplish. The sense among the Commission is that we should take the house of educational governance "down to the studs" and re-build it as we need it today for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Commission does not suggest any particular governance model by itself will cause certain effects to occur. We do remind policy-makers that there appeared to be an association between governance structures in states we visited in 2002 and the presence in their states of strong vision, leadership, and a focus on results. Whatever other differences there may be between Washington and the four other states, the delegation of visitors from Washington noted the other states unify responsibility, authority and accountability in ways Washington does not.

Governance reform should present an opportunity to promote visionary leadership, to reduce fragmentation, to institute clear accountability for state elected leaders, to include stakeholders and encourage collaboration, and to render state education policy efforts more coherent, more efficient, more effective and more understandable to the public.

The Commission continues to stand ready to participate in any state efforts to analyze or restructure Washington's educational governance structure.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

OSPI has developed changes it will recommend be made to federal NCLB Act provisions, either in statute or in departmental guidelines and regulations. OSPI is in the process of continuing to seek input from concerned individuals and organizations, and will likely continue refining the document outlining suggested revisions. The current version of those recommendations is reprinted here for informational purposes. The Commission has not taken a general position on this issue; nor has it taken positions on the specific suggestions made here.

### A Washington State Proposal To Ensure Successful Implementation of No Child Left Behind

Washington State fully supports, deeply believes, and actively pursues the goal of No Child Left Behind (NCLB); **ALL** students achieving at high levels. We welcome the additional support NCLB has brought to focus on quality education, the improvements needed to reach all children, and the urgency nationwide, to close achievement gaps. We support a feasible and fair accountability system.

Washington State has attained approval and is in full compliance with the requirements provided in the regulations. We have had the opportunity to analyze the 2002-03 statewide assessment data and apply the new requirements for the determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for schools, districts, and the state. Initial concerns regarding the technical issues in the legislation and subsequent regulations have been realized. The release of Washington data made it clear to us that some specific regulatory mechanisms, in their present form, will undermine the confidence in and the ability for public education to accomplish the goals.

There are three areas in this proposal requesting flexibility that, if approved, will ensure successful implementation of NCLB.

1. Alternative Systems to Achieve the Goals
2. Changes to AYP for Program Groups
3. Changes to Accountability Mechanisms

#### 1. Alternative Systems to Achieve the Goals

Like Washington, a number of states have been very thorough about setting up fair accountability systems with high standards and expectations. These states should be allowed to petition the Department of Education to present a *quality* plan that includes alternative strategies to accomplish the **mission and goals** of NCLB, as long as the alternative state plans address the major elements within the law and reflect the goal of 100% proficiency by 2014.

## **2. AYP for Program Groups**

Special Education and Bilingual/Limited English Proficient (LEP) are specialized education *programs*. Students with disabilities and LEP students in these programs are already in the accountability system in two or three other groups; “all students”, their respective race/ethnic group, and perhaps the economically disadvantaged (low income) group. They are also however, counted again in the nine categories of the AYP matrix in their program categories. The children in these two programs in our state (and across the nation) face very different challenges. Thus, a more constructive and valid accountability approach must be differentiated in order to work.

Many children with disabilities are able to meet the intellectual demands of our state standards and our Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). For instance, some visually or hearing impaired children need accommodations, but they take the test and meet the standards. Others have cognitive disabilities that prevent them from succeeding. These children need a different test. The statewide assessment is not a fair and valid measure of their skills. Thus, we need more leeway in the assessment system for these students.

LEP students on the other hand, are in their program because they cannot speak, read, or write English. The WASL is not fair or valid for them because they cannot access the language on the test. Title III of the NCLB Act requires our accountability as educators to address English language proficiency in an effective and timely manner. Students exit the program when have achieved that proficiency. The children appropriately placed in the program do not have that proficiency. This means that the students are not getting valid feedback from the statewide assessment on their content skill levels, and schools are caught in a “catch 22” situation. Once schools are successful in assisting a student to attain English proficiency (in reading, writing, speaking, and listening), the student exits the program. The student's and school's success, therefore, is not credited in the AYP calculations. The same is true for any students with disabilities who successfully exit special education. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are designed to assist students to compensate or overcome specific disabilities. That success, similar to the LEP is not credited in the AYP calculations.

Washington is committed to being accountable for all students and requests flexibility in the current system requirements to design the accountability for special education and LEP programs that would sufficiently value and give credit to progress unique to these two program groups.

### **A. Inclusion of ELL Students in State Assessments:**

NCLB requires that all students enrolled be included in state assessments and that 95% of such students (overall and in each group) participate for a school or district to demonstrate AYP. This includes LEP. However, in most instances, it is not educationally valid or appropriate for newly enrolled LEP students to participate in state assessments. By definition, LEP students are not proficient in reading on the State's assessments;

Sec. 9101(25) of NCLB defines a Limited English Proficient student as one –

“(D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual –

- (i) the ability to meet the State’s proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3);
- (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
- (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.”

Given this NCLB definition of LEP students that collectively comprise the LEP group, a definition strongly aligned to Washington State’s own definition of an LEP student, it is impossible for this group (assuming students are appropriately placed in this group) to reach 100% proficiency.

#### **B. Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in State Assessments:**

NCLB requires that all students be held to the same high standards. The final regulations supporting the enforcement of NCLB at Section 200.6 (a) (2) (ii) make clear that alternate assessment systems must yield results for the grade in which a student with disabilities is enrolled...."even if the IEP team believes that academic and cognitive testing demonstrate that the student is not capable of performing at that level." These same regulations state that a child with a disability is consistent with the IDEA definition of child with a disability in Section 602 (3) (A) of the statute. Section 602 (3) (A) states that the term child with a disability means a child-

- (i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (hereinafter referred to as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and
- (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Further, students eligible for special education and related services under any of the above disability categories must demonstrate an adverse educational impact of the disability and therefore are in need of specially designed instruction (See IDEA regulations at 34 CFR 300.7, 300.13, 300.20, 300.22 and 300.517).

Many students who appropriately meet the eligibility criteria for receipt of special education and related services are, by definition, unable to reach 100% proficiency. If they were able to meet 100% proficiency they would be, by definition, ineligible for special education and related services. Further, requiring an assessment system to account for special education eligible students "even if the IEP team believes that academic and cognitive testing demonstrates that the student is not capable of performing at that level," undermines the authority of an IEP team constituted by federal and state law, and seriously compromises any meaningful results associated with statewide testing efforts.

For special education students with severe cognitive disabilities the regulations allow schools/districts to demonstrate AYP based on their individual learning standards (as established by each student's IEP team). Unfortunately, these regulations: 1) establish caps on the percentage of students whose scores on alternate assessments may be counted for AYP purposes, 2) rigidly define those students for whom such alternate assessments are appropriate, and 3) do not address graduation rates (meaning that students with severe cognitive disabilities who do not receive a regular diploma count against high schools/districts in demonstrating AYP). This could have a serious negative impact on the current successful inclusionary practices in schools and districts.

***Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes:***

Amend NCLB regulations to permit states to:

- develop alternative accountability mechanisms for special education and LEP *program* groups under IDEA and Title III that would replace the existing AYP accountability regulations for these programs.
- use English proficiency (not substantive academic proficiency or content knowledge) to hold schools and districts accountable in the LEP student's first one to three years of enrollment.
- excuse from state academic assessments LEP students whose English language skills are at the "Beginning" level of English proficiency (as defined by a NCLB approved English proficiency test) for one academic school year to avert the negative psychometric, legal and moral implications of including these students in state assessments which are not educationally appropriate.
- exclude from AYP calculations LEP students state assessment scores until LEP students achieve an English proficiency level of "Advanced" (as defined by a NCLB approved English proficiency test) up to a maximum of three years, to avert the negative psychometric, legal and moral implications of including these students in state assessments that are not educationally appropriate.
- use alternate assessments for students with disabilities as determined by each student's IEP team and allow these results to be included in AYP calculations, subject to monitoring by the state.
- include as graduates students with significant disabilities for whom receipt of a regular diploma is not an appropriate educational goal. Each student's IEP team, using transition plans, should make that determination.
- set separate starting points by group and/or school or district.
- differentiate NCLB sanctions and timelines for imposing them as may be warranted, depending on whether the school or district does not meet AYP overall, for individual groups, and/or, more specifically, for the special education and LEP groups.

### **In Lieu of Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes Above:**

**If students with disabilities and limited English proficiency are included as presently required in the AYP calculations:**

- Give greater flexibility in the assessment of students with disabilities. Let the IEP team determine what assessments are instructionally relevant, including out-of-level testing as an appropriate AYP measure.
- Remove the limitation on the percentage of students who can take an alternate assessment, and remove the limitation on the percentage of students whose results can be counted as meeting standard. IDEA regulations determine eligibility and should not be “limited” or “capped” by NCLB regulations.
- Allow states to continually track students in special education and bilingual categories who have exited from the programs and count them in the AYP results for special education and LEP groups.
- Develop an alternate set of sanctions if a school/district does not make AYP based only on these two programs.
- Allow for a different baseline to be established for these two program groups.
- Allow the 10% reduction annually (safe harbor calculations) to be used for these programs in determination of AYP, regardless of “all” categories qualifying before accessing safe harbor provisions.

### **3. Accountability Mechanisms**

#### **Use of Continuous Improvement Models:**

NCLB requirements for setting AYP results in a “one-size fits all” accountability measure that assumes that all schools, districts, and each group of students will progress from the same baseline score. The required “one” state uniform bar in reading and mathematics set incredibly high targets for struggling schools or individual groups of student populations to be reached in one year. The unintended consequence is that the exact student population that NCLB is designed to help, becomes the target “reason” a school or district is “failing”.

#### ***Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes:***

- Amend NCLB regulations to permit states to adopt continuous growth models in which AYP baselines for schools, districts, and the state are determined from their current level of performance, and then permit states to set increments and safe harbor rules leading to 100% proficiency for all students over 12 years.

**Consecutive Years for AYP Based on Same Subject AND Same Group:**

NCLB requires that schools that do not meet AYP for two (or more) consecutive years be placed in school improvement. Regulations permit states to identify for school improvement only those schools that do not meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject, but prohibit states from treating groups the same way. This model raises reliability concerns given the multitude of AYP groups that may not demonstrate AYP for one year, and it fails to recognize the different educational problems that may be evidenced, and interventions that may be appropriate, in cases where different groups do not demonstrate AYP.

***Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes:***

- Clarify through regulations that NCLB permits states to identify for school improvement only those schools that do not meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject **and** for the same group.

**Sanctions for School Choice and Supplemental Services:**

NCLB requires 15 - 20 percent of district Title I funds to be set aside for the sanctions of school choice beginning the very first year and supplemental services in the second year of the school being identified as “in need of improvement”. While school improvement planning is appropriate at these early “steps” of school improvement, research shows that systemic, effective “second order” change takes time to implement and incorporate into a culture of continuous improvement. Sanctions imposed in the first year fly in the face of that research.

***Necessary NCLB Changes:***

- Give schools 2-3 years to make necessary improvements to make AYP before requiring the set-aside formula to fund the sanctions for the school choice and supplemental services. (Step 3 or 4 of School Improvement identification – NOT the first year.)

**Supplemental Service Providers**

**Regulations prohibit SEAs from requiring supplemental service providers to hire staff that meet the highly qualified teacher requirements of Section 1119. Students who are low performing may receive supplemental services from individuals with no educational qualifications.**

***Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes:***

- Allow states to require that primary instructors working for approved supplemental service providers meet the same highly qualified teacher requirements as teachers in public schools.

**Use of Learning Index Systems for AYP:**

Mechanisms for motivating change and recognizing progress underlie any effective accountability system. NCLB defines AYP based solely on whether students achieve “proficiency” on state assessments. This model does not fully evaluate or give credit for improved student performance at other levels (e.g., movement from below basic to basic or from proficient to advanced).

***Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes:***

- Amend NCLB regulations to clarify how states can adopt index systems by which AYP is determined based on student progress at all levels of achievement.
- Permit states to get credit for moving students not only from basic to proficient, but also from proficient to advanced.

**Multiple Administrations of State Assessments:**

Regulations require that AYP be based on the first administration of state assessments. Lower performing students can receive immediate interventions to help each student achieve and demonstrate proficiency. Since meeting proficiency on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade assessment will be a graduation requirement in 2008, Washington State intends to establish multiple opportunities for students to re-take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level as well as provide an approved alternative means that is required to be comparable in rigor to the WASL, in order to allow students more than one opportunity to demonstrate proficiency.

***Necessary NCLB Regulation Changes:***

- Clarify through regulations that NCLB permits states to count multiple administrations of state assessments. When the state assessment is used as a graduation requirement, permit retakes and approved alternatives to demonstrating proficiency to be calculated in the determination of AYP.

**Implementation of State Assessments; 3-8 and High School:**

NCLB requires statewide assessments in reading and mathematics grades 3-8 and a high school assessment. Additional science assessments in grade bands are also required. While the required assessment *development* is adequately funded between now and 2005, the federal NCLB budget model is not designed to adequately support administration, scoring, and implementation of data collection and reporting requirements. One of the great strengths of NCLB is its requirement for high quality assessments. Our history in Washington has clearly shown that the costs associated with proper implementation of such assessments are heavily weighted toward scoring and data release for learning improvement. We have an historic opportunity across the country to design and use excellent assessments that will improve student learning. However, under-funding this assessment system over the next decade will undermine the quality of assessment information and therefore, our ability to achieve the goals of NCLB.

***Necessary NCLB Appropriations Changes:***

- Fund NCLB at adequate levels to ensure appropriate increases in funding are provided to *implement* and *make use of* data from the required assessment system.

## Appendix B

### Commission and Stakeholder Retreat

The Progress section of this report provides a backdrop for understanding how the June 2-3 meeting, which brought Commission members together with high level representatives of education related agencies and organizations, came about. This appendix re-prints the content of a key phase of the two-day discussion. For a copy of the meeting summary in its entirety, please contact the Commission or visit our website.

The following individuals participated in the meeting.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>GROUP</b>
Anderson, Jeanne	Early Learning Foundation
Armstrong, Mack	Washington Association of School Administrators
Bergeson, Terry	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Bouse, Richelle	Commission Member
Bowden, John	Commission Staff
Butts, Bob	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Crawford, Debra	Commission Staff
Davis, Karen	Washington Education Association
Dorn, Randy	Public School Employees
Edmonds, Mabel	House Caucus (D)
Erskine, Roger	League of Ed. Voters
Fletcher, Connie	Washington State School Directors' Association
Fuhrman, Laura	House Caucus (R)
Heuschel, Mary Alice	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Himmeler, Art	Commission Member
Jones, Kenneth	Gates Foundation
Kenfield, Mary	Washington State Parent Teachers Association
Kipp, Gary	Association of Washington School Principals
Kohn, Laura	Gates Foundation
MacFarlane, Lisa	League of Education Voters
May, Bobbie	State Board of Education
McMullen, Bob	Association of Washington School Principals
Mullin, Steve	Washington Roundtable

Raichle, Patty	Washington Education Association
Randall, Ann	Washington Education Association
Sanchez, Richardo	Latino Education Achievement Project
Schmit, Lee	Commission Member
Shaw, David	Commission Chair
Spady, Jim	Commission Member
Thompson, Chris	Commission Staff
Vranek, Jennifer	Partnership for Learning

The meeting focused at some length on what success would look like ten years in the future. The group then discussed what step would need to be taken to bring about that successful future. This is the phase of discussion described below.

### **Phase Three: ‘What needs to be done to get there?’**

*Four of the topics that emerged from the prior discussion were selected for additional discussion: Teaching quality, Accountability, P-16 education system, and Leadership. Participants selected a topic of their choice from among the four options, and conducted more focused discussions within small groups. The groups were asked to address three questions as outlined below.*

## **TEACHING QUALITY**

### **Question 1: What needs to be in place to bring about these results?’**

1. Quality teachers for every child in every classroom.
2. Quality teachers:
  - Know their kids
  - Know their content
  - Know how to deliver the content
  - Get results
3. Teachers are lifelong learners
4. Retention
  - Salaries that are competitive
  - Support in buildings
5. Accountability for Results
  - Value-added data collection
  - Individualized student assessment – longitudinal data collection

6. Money
  - Higher pay for all
  - Increased pay for:
    - i. Professional certification, degrees, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification, etc.
    - ii. Increased responsibility (for example, as mentor, curriculum developer, student teacher support.)
    - iii. High shortage areas

**Question 2: “What needs to happen to have these things in place?”**

1. A comprehensive redesign/realignment of the teacher compensation system is needed to match the requirements, including these elements:
  - Reflect differentiated roles and responsibilities
  - Reflect local market needs
  - Target increased effectiveness in the classroom
2. Attract students to teaching, through:
  - Scholarships and incentives – especially for:
    - Special Education
    - Bilingual
    - Math
    - Science
  - Providing exposure to positive role models.
3. Pre-service preparation requirements need to include:
  - One-year apprenticeship programs
  - Five-year plans – BA in content, MA in Education
  - Teacher candidates demonstrate competencies; know their kids as individuals and as group members; know the state content standards (EALRs); meet goals tied to instruction; know and use instructional practices that are considered by consensus to be the best; instruction is tied to assessment as teachers use multiple measures of assessment for themselves and their students.
  - Experience with culturally diverse populations
4. Professional Development provides:
  - Induction system
  - Mentors for first 2 years
  - A redesigned Professional Certificate that accounts for time and expense and fine-tuning

- Ongoing learning that is:
  - g. Site based
  - h. Job embedded
  - i. Continuous
  - j. Data driven
  - k. Compensated
  - l. Accountable
- Teacher Leadership requires that career development paths be created
  - a. National Board Certification -- remove the financial barriers, to multiply by 1000 our number of national board certified teachers
  - b. Mentor/model teachers need opportunities for leading without leaving; Create opportunities for teachers to serve as:
    - Mentor
    - Curriculum developer
    - Staff developer
    - School improvement facilitator
    - Master teachers work with struggling students, supported by financial and honorary incentives for working with the most struggling students and in high poverty communities.

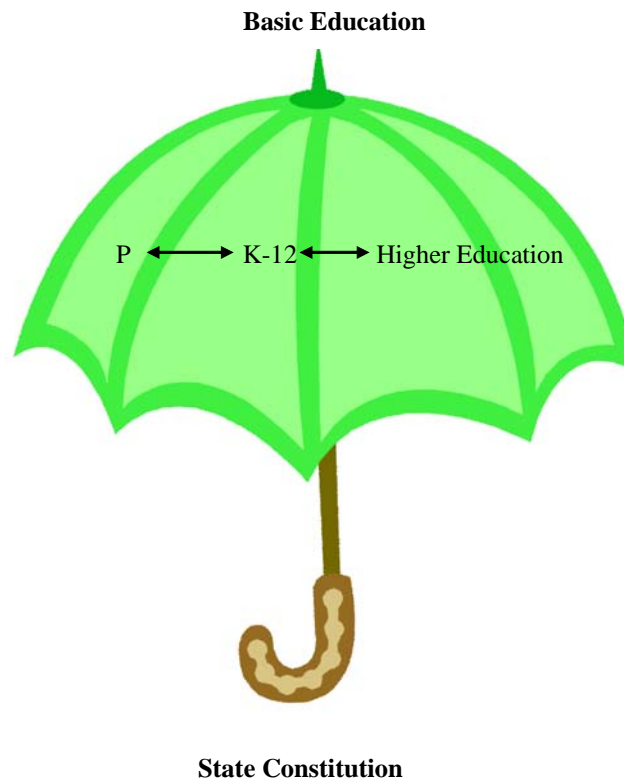
**Question 3: “What can we start doing now and who should do it?”**

1. Develop framework of a redesigned teacher compensation/accountability system (2003-2004)
  - utilize process and results of K-12 finance study funded in June '03 [Editor's note: this project was not funded by Legislature]
  - recommend plan, spending and revenue
2. Pull together the “anchors” (Governor, SPI, Business, Teachers) to review plan, negotiate an agreement and build support. (2004-2005)
  - Product: Agreement that gets support among stakeholders and public. Can become legislation or initiative.
3. Build support among stakeholders, policy makers, opinion leaders. (04-05)
4. Build will among public/citizens/taxpayers (2005-2006)
  - Comprehensive campaign – coordinated
  - Anchors invest and invested
  - Road show with all anchors
  - One message with many media
5. Implementation (2006 and beyond)

6. Evaluation and refinement (2008 and beyond)
  - External studies
  - Pull anchors together periodically to assure progress and unity of purpose.
7. Develop standards and assessments for multiple stages of teaching career.
  - Who: State Board of Education, Professional Educator Standards Board, SPI, WA Assn. of Colleges of Teacher Education
  - Clarify and assign roles/responsibilities to ensure sufficient authority and power to improve pre-service and in-service professional development.
8. Audit/examine (one-time study, representative sample) school, district, state, federal funds spent on professional development and how. Make recommendations to re-examine.
9. Disseminate best practices and celebrate what works.

## **P-16 AS BASIC EDUCATION**

By the year 2013, the state has redefined basic education as extending from Pre-school through baccalaureate level (P-16).



The vision is one in which the state Constitution, through constitutional amendment, provides the foundation for the new definition of Basic Education. The vision includes three sectors under one umbrella – the pre-school sector, the Kindergarten through grade 12 common school sector, and the postsecondary education sector, including both 2-year and 4-year institutions.

All residents of Washington state have access to high quality education beginning in Pre-school and continuing through higher education.

**Question 1: What needs to be in place to bring about these results?"**

1. Public will and support for concept
  - Shared sense of urgency
  - Compelling research
  - Collaboration among 3 sectors
2. Constitutional changes
3. Governance structure, including the creation of a governing body that spans all three sectors
4. Inspired leadership
5. Clear understanding of direction and outcomes and benefits
  - Standards
  - Metrics
  - Accountability
6. A call for it – public will – sea change – paradigm shift

**Question 2: "What needs to happen to have these things in place?"**

1. Stable, equitable, sustainable, adequate funding (P-16)
2. Pre-kindergarten teachers have comparable salaries, and educational qualifications of an K-12 elementary school teacher
3. Development of outcome expectations for pre-school and higher education (EALR equivalent)
4. Transition services (pre-school through K-12, K-12 through higher education)
5. Pre-school happens in a variety of settings

6. Scholarship programs (TEACH) for childcare providers
7. Articulation agreements among higher education institutions
8. Development of metrics within and between sectors
9. Integration of this plan with state economic development

**Question 3: “What can we start doing now and who should do it?”**

1. Inspired leadership to create support. Every organization here could hold a leadership meeting to address these same three questions.
2. Get the compelling case/research out to create sense of urgency
  - What tells us that our definition of basic education is needed.
  - What convinces us that a P-16 system will bring about results?
3. Connect educated population with a healthy economy in state (jobs, growth)

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Question 1: “What needs to be in place to bring about these results?”**

1. There is a simplified governance system
2. It is clear who is responsible for what and to whom
3. Accountability is shared among groups in diverse roles, including:
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - Administrators
  - School Boards
  - Legislators
  - State Superintendent
  - Governor
4. Each of these entities knows the results that it is incumbent upon all in their roles to attempt to achieve
5. Each group knows which other entities will hold them accountable for achieving those results

6. Each group knows what consequences may attach to either achieving or not achieving the results
7. The system identifies successes and failures
8. There are objective ways to diagnose problems at the school and district levels, provide supports, and take necessary corrective actions
9. There are clear targets; both the grade level content expectations and goals are clear
10. There is transparent school and district performance data and performance improvement-relative-to-challenge data.

**Question 2: “What needs to happen to have these things in place?”**

1. An adequate support system must be in place.
2. Language needs of the student must be addressed
3. Individual learning plans
4. Value-added assessment
5. Assessment literacy tools
6. Aligned curriculum materials must be identified and available
7. Secure student identifier
8. Incentives and recognition for high performing and improving schools and students

**Question 3: “What can we start doing now and who should do it?”**

1. Grade level content expectations
  - OSPI in collaboration with stakeholders needs to develop them in reading and math in 2003, and in science in 2004

2. School and district performance data
  - Refinement of OSPI website
  - Continued reporting of the Learning Improvement Index
  - Scale score reporting
  - Continuous improvement in graduation and dropout data
  - A+ Commission needs to provide annual state of education reporting concerning exemplary schools and districts
3. Adequate Support Systems
  - Expanded focused assistance [OSPI responsible]
4. Individualized learning plans [School Districts responsible]
5. Assessment literacy training and tools [OSPI, ESDs, Districts]
6. Aligned curriculum identified and available [OSPI, ESDs, Districts]
  - Design efficient regional instructional and curriculum assistance [OSPI/ESDs]
7. Advocate for necessary resources [A+ Commission]
8. Value-Added assessment [A+ Commission]
  - Annual Assessments [A+ Commission/OSPI]
  - Individual student identifier [A+ Commission/OSPI]
9. Aggressively monitor and report all education related agencies with accountability responsibility [A+ Commission]
10. Incentives and recognition for high performing and rapidly improving schools and students [A+ Commission]
  - Advocate for school-based performance incentives [A+ Commission]

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Question 1: What needs to be in place to bring about these results?**

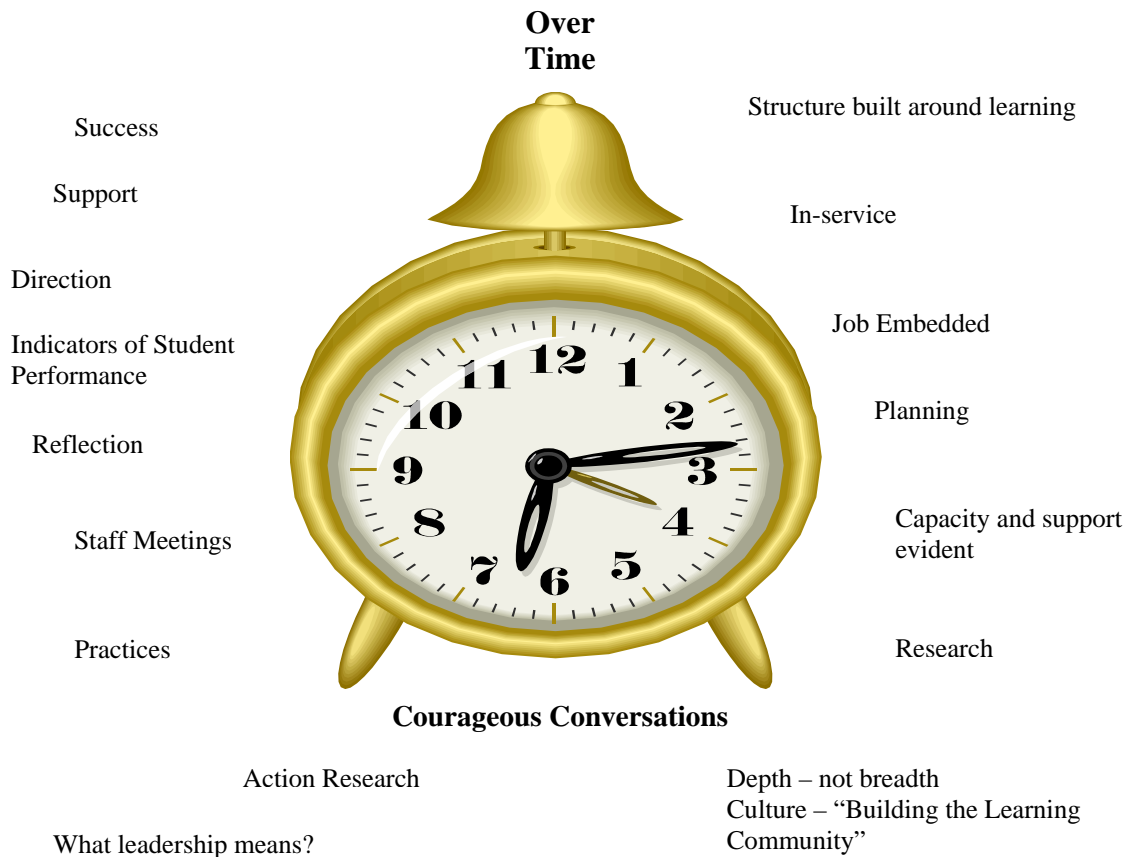
1. There are visionary leaders with BOLD ideas and the courage to carry them out.
2. All principals are providing educational leadership for their staff causing schools to improve.
3. All buildings are led by people who have skills and knowledge to run problem-solving organizations.

4. Principals will be better instructional leaders.
5. There are support-resources, expertise, materials for teachers, schools and districts facing specific challenges.
6. Every district in the state has a superintendent who is providing leadership with school improvement as a focus for every student in every school.
7. Principal leaders go through a renewal experience through “leadership academies” every 3 years that support directions of education reform.
8. WASL, especially at high school level, will be administered at central locations – perhaps ESDs – instead of at each school. Students will have a choice of time of year to take them.
9. Discussions on improving education no longer laced with fears of failure.
10. North Carolina-like benchmarking. Report cards that serve to guide public policy and funding decisions.
11. The education system is acknowledged “successful” by:
  - 100% literacy rate
  - All students hold multiple endorsements
  - Choice in learning paths and content is lawful.
13. Children become the priorities of government.
14. The Governor of Washington is the leader and champion of education.
15. We know when he/she has gone to bat for funding and support with the Legislature, public and business interests.
16. Leaders inspire the troops to see/follow the vision; analyze practices
17. Leaders are instructionally focused on learning and student achievement
18. Leaders recognize the difference between policies and practices that support “sorting and sifting” vs. getting all students to achieve at high standards.
19. Leaders believe that their own growth is a reflective/renewal experience through ongoing professional development.
20. Leaders create a teacher/leader and community learning environment based on best practices/strategies – risk taking is seen as a laboratory setting.

21. Leaders articulate messages from the building to legislative arenas in ways that “bring reality” to decisions.
22. Leaders share a common message about student achievement to everybody.
23. Leaders identify staff needs for building leadership and hiring is done according to leadership strengths to form “the admin team”
24. Look within existing association structures to groom for the “big picture-next steps” to move to next level – look at jobs, roles that teacher leaders hold – building leaders – district leadership.
25. Coaching – mentoring models in place to move attitudes and confidence of teachers and leaders to see next step.
26. Teacher preparation programs include information on seeing next big picture roles (functions) from classroom to next job “service”. “What they do is important to total system.”
27. Outlined professional growth map for principals
28. Performance-based evaluation standards mechanism outlined for evaluators and training to support risk taking in leadership.
29. Well outlined plan to identify, orient and mentor early teacher leaders.
30. National Board certified teachers groomed for building leadership.
31. Initial training at universities, professional in-service, teachers/staff evaluations should seek good leaders.
32. Potential leaders intern as principals for day – “try on the hat”.
33. We want a diverse set of people in place at all levels “visible leaders” – schools, workplaces, employees, superintendents, state leaders.
34. State leaders recognize impact of policy changes – and remove/reduce policies that negatively impact student achievement
35. Integrated and coordinated state level governance structure.
36. Teachers, principals and central administration see best practices that lead to learning organizations where risks were taken with success for learning and with students reviewed, evaluated, updated.

## **Question 2: “What needs to happen to have these things in place?”**

1. We want a diverse set of people in place at all levels – “visible leaders.”
  - Develop cohort groups within regions
  - Encourage future teachers of color
  - Target principals and others in the state – mentor them, provide financial support (forgivable loans, district-paid tuition – reduce financial barriers).
  - Safe/Civil Environment – School system needs to create warm, welcoming, supportive environments – offer classes for education as vocation.
  - Provide teaching practica for high school students.
2. We want a state governance structure that is integrated and coordinated.
  - Conduct an independent study of education governance (roles, authority etc.) and make recommendations to restructure.
  - Certifications that are aligned with leadership skills of teachers, principals, superintendent.
  - Need a plan/vision for the state – what do we want to accomplish by restructuring?
  - Need an adequate, stable funding mechanism based on performance based system.
3. We want a learning organization that supports best practices, has a willingness to take risks to support student learning, and whose leaders encourage thinking “out of the box”.



4. We want opportunities to groom appropriately trained leaders.  
(Superintendents, principals, school board, parents, teachers, central office, state level)
  - State level academies are established
  - Research other models that lead to implementing good training opportunities
  - Provide practicum opportunities
  - Provide introductory experiences to see leadership as a function, not a position.
  - Provide richer staff ratio to provide additional leadership opportunities.
  - Training curriculums, reviewed/revised to tailor it to Washington education efforts for performance based leadership.
  - Clarification of leadership practices that meet professional standards.
  - Identifying, recruiting, supporting professional stages of growth throughout educational service/careers.

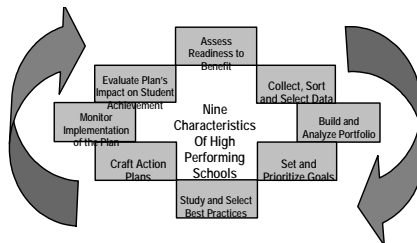
## Appendix C

### Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

The Commission has endeavored to bear in mind the nine characteristics of high performing schools throughout the conduct of its work over the past year. To underscore that focus, the characteristics are re-printed here to remind readers of these important principles when considering the challenge of scaling up reform to the system-wide scope of improvement for which we all strive.

#### Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Research has shown that there is no single thing that schools can do to ensure student learning. High performing schools do however, tend to have the following nine characteristics in common:



##### 1. Clear and Shared Focus

Everybody knows where they are going and why. The vision is shared – everybody is involved and all understand their roles in achieving the vision. The vision is developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent focus.

##### 2. High Standards and Expectations

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and that they can teach all students. There is recognition of barriers for some students to overcome, but the barriers are not insurmountable. Students become engaged in an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

##### 3. Effective school Leadership

Effective leadership is required to implement change processes within the school. This leadership takes many forms. Principals often play this role, but so do teachers and other staff, including those in the district office. Effective leaders advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

##### 4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is constant collaboration and communication between and among teachers of all grades. Everybody is involved and connected, including parents and members of the community, to solve problems and create solutions.

##### 5. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards

Curriculum is aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). Research-based materials and teaching and learning strategies are implemented. There is a clear understanding of the assessment system, what is measured in various assessments and how it is measured.

##### 6. Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning are continually adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. A variety of assessment procedures are used. The results of the assessment are used to improve student performances and also improve the instructional program.

##### 7. Focused Professional Development

Professional development for all educators is aligned with the school's and district's common focus, objectives, and high expectations. It is ongoing and based on high need areas.

##### 8. Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff, and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

##### 9. High Level of Community and Parent Involvement

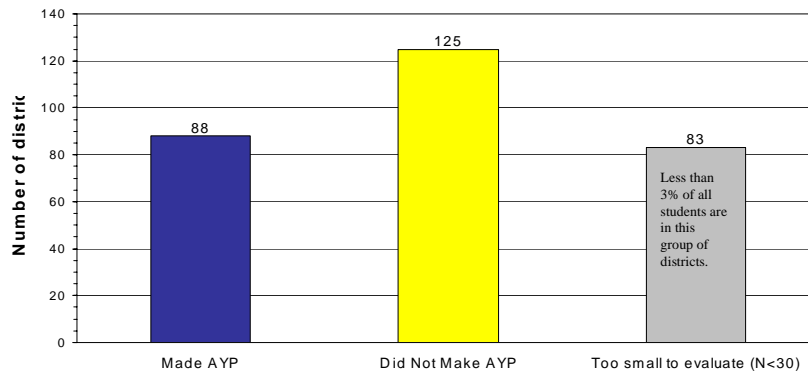
There is a sense that all educational stakeholders have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Parents, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

## Appendix D

### Adequate Yearly Progress Results

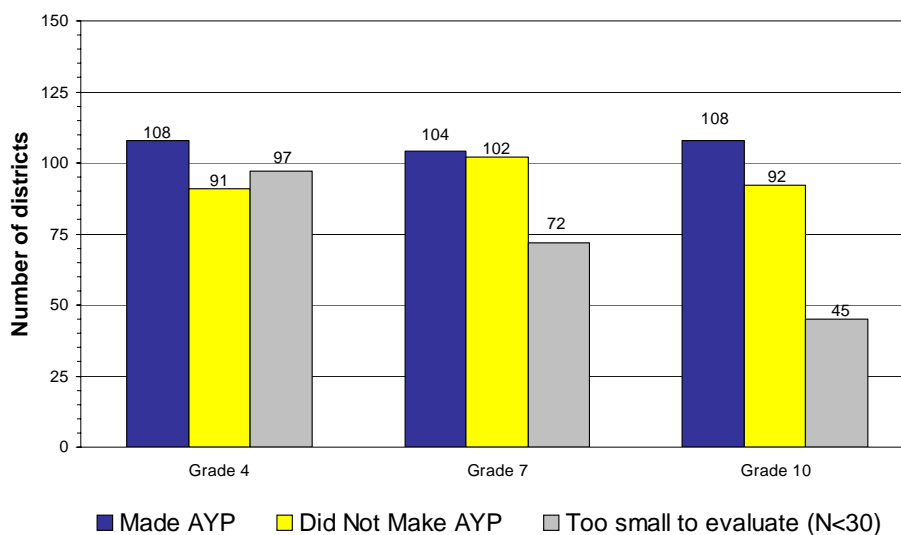
#### District 2003 AYP Results (All Grades)

296 Districts



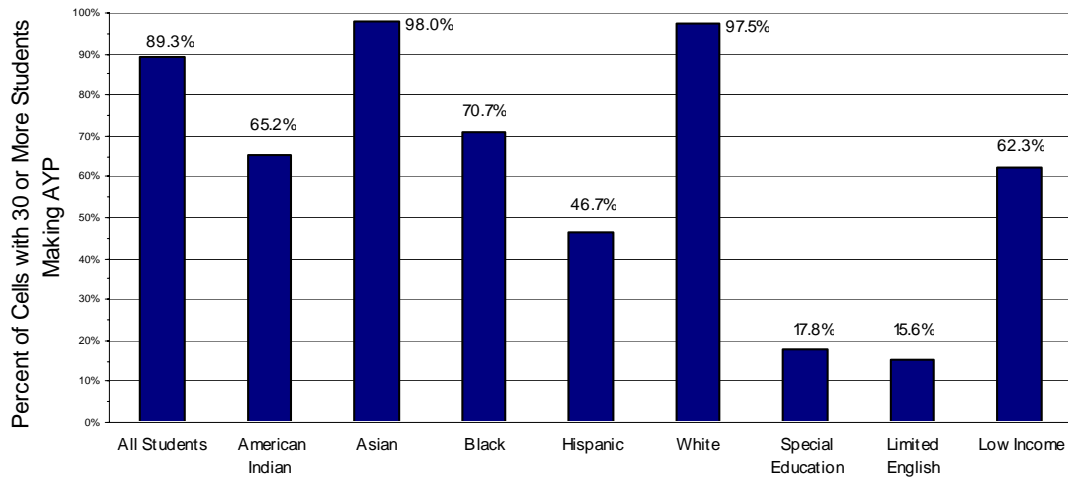
Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

#### District 2003 AYP Results by Grade



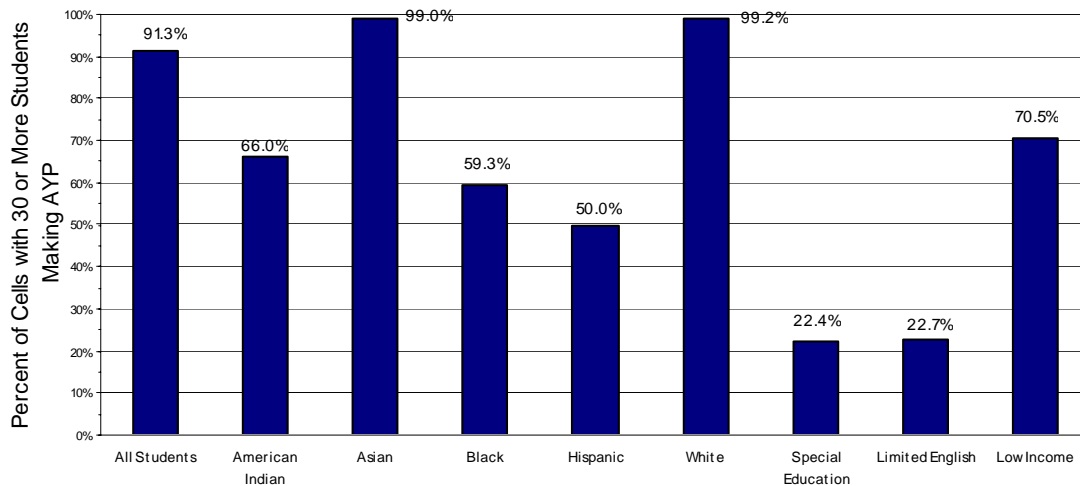
Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

## District 2003 AYP Group Results All Grades in Reading



Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

## District 2003 AYP Group Results All Grades in Math

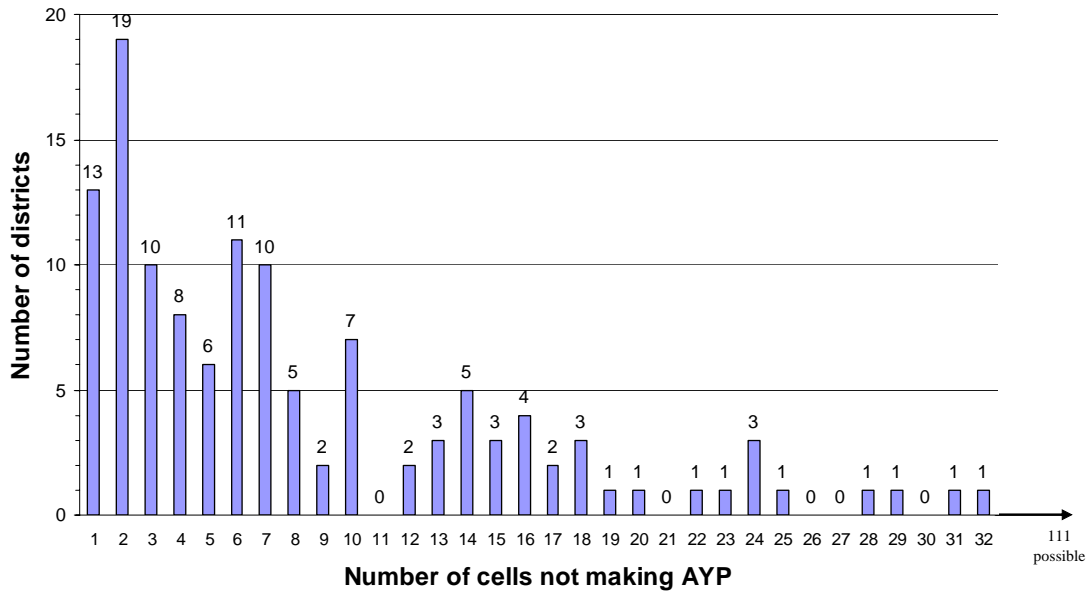


Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

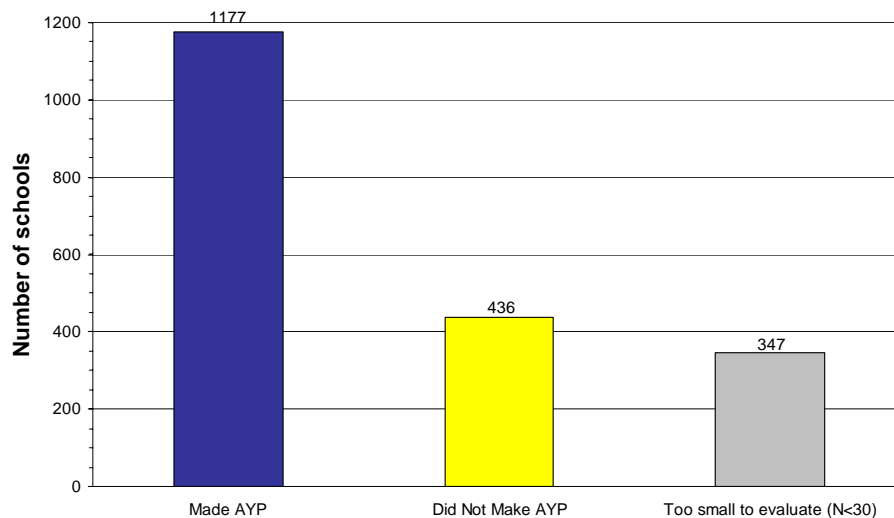
## District AYP Results, 2003

Number of Categories Not Making AYP in the 125 Districts

### All Grades



## School 2003 Results (All Grades) Adequate Yearly Progress

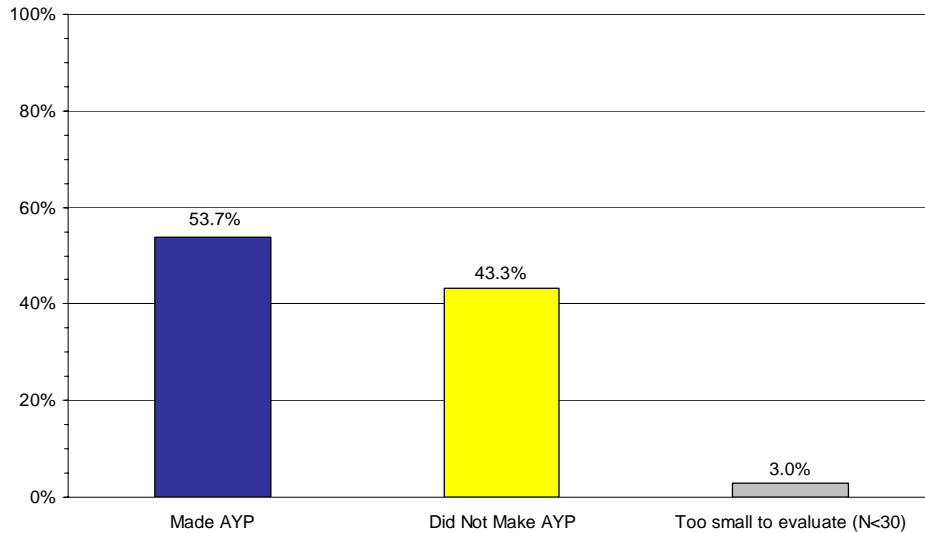


Some schools have students in two or three tested grades (e.g., K-8 or K-12).



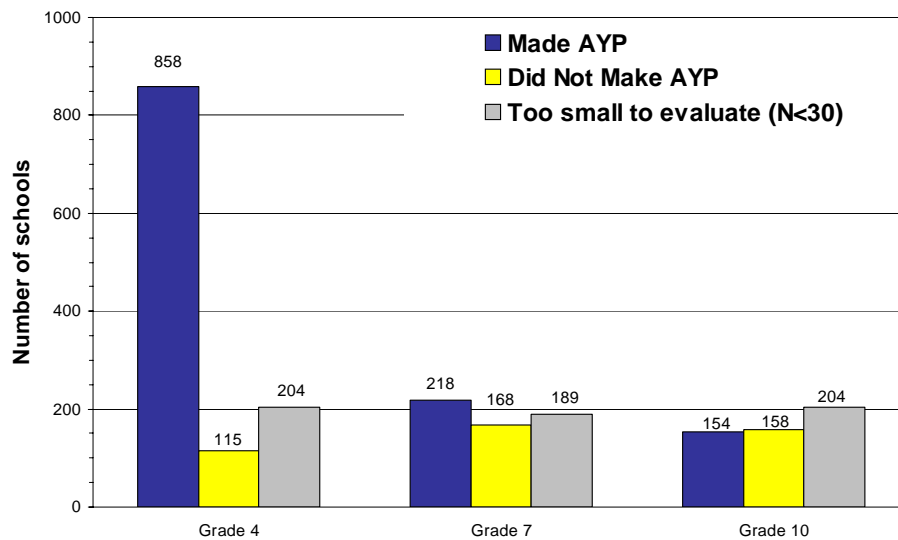
Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

## Percent of Students in Schools by AYP Result



Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

## School 2003 Results (By Grade Level) Adequate Yearly Progress



Washington State  
**2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Results**

# Appendix E

## WASL Results for Schools in Focused Assistance

Focused Assistance Cohort 1 Elementary Schools Reading Improvement									
Building	2001 Percentage Meeting Standard	2002 Percentage Meeting Standard	2003 Percentage Meeting Standard	Change from 2001 to 2003		2001 Learning Index	2002 Learning Index	2003 Learning Index	Change from 2001 to 2003
School Number 1 <sup>1</sup>	41.7	55.8	62.7	21.0		2.54	2.60	2.71	0.17
School Number 2 <sup>2</sup>	22.2	33.3	38.8	16.6		1.91	2.29	2.35	0.44
School Number 3	23.7	36.0	46.0	22.3		2.01	2.15	2.38	0.37
School Number 4	35.4	40.0	48.2	12.8		2.20	2.45	2.37	0.17
School Number 5	31.0	51.2	51.3	20.3		2.12	2.63	2.54	0.42
School Number 6	41.2	42.2	58.8	17.5		2.47	2.38	2.65	0.18
School Number 7	16.1	47.9	50.0	33.9		1.87	2.58	2.50	0.63
School Number 8	30.3	55.6	49.0	18.7		2.15	2.71	2.37	0.22
School Number 9	23.2	36.9	45.7	22.5		1.98	2.31	2.31	0.33
Mathematics Improvement									
Building	2001 Percentag e Meeting Standard	2002 Percentage Meeting Standard	2003 Percentage Meeting Standard	Change from 2001 to 2003		2001 Learning Index	2002 Learning Index	2003 Learning Index	Change from 2001 to 2003
School Number 1	6.3	7.0	42.4	36.1		1.51	2.33	2.50	0.88
School Number 2	7.4	31.1	30.6	23.2		2.12	2.24	2.19	0.81
School Number 3	15.1	20.2	20.0	4.9		2.93	2.49	2.92	0.26
School Number 4	7.6	27.3	50.0	42.4		2.34	2.80	2.40	1.05
School Number 5	11.9	24.4	35.9	24.0		1.91	2.00	1.88	0.60
School Number 6	16.5	39.2	42.3	25.8		2.14	2.00	2.14	0.69
School Number 7	6.5	35.4	53.8	47.4		1.93	2.34	2.37	0.96
School Number 8	13.6	51.1	47.1	33.4		2.35	1.91	2.09	0.71
School Number 9	14.3	35.1	35.3	21.1		1.63	2.22	2.16	0.56
<sup>1</sup> Also in Washington Reads and Washington Reading Corps									
<sup>2</sup> Also in Washington Reading Corps									

**Focused Assistance Cohort 1 Middle/Junior High Schools  
Reading Improvement**

Building	2001 Percentage Meeting Standard	2002 Percentage Meeting Standard	2003 Percentage Meeting Standard	Change from 2001 to 2003		2001 Learning Index	2002 Learning Index	2003 Learning Index	Change from 2001 to 2003
School Number 1	13.7	16.8	12.2	-1.5		1.72	1.65	1.56	-0.16
School Number 2	13.1	16.7	16.1	3.0		1.46	1.74	1.80	0.34
School Number 3	14.7	12.7	13.5	-1.1		1.61	1.69	1.69	0.08
School Number 4	11.4	18.0	25.2	13.8		1.62	1.85	1.95	0.33
School Number 5	15.6	18.8	20.2	4.7		1.64	1.76	1.82	0.18
School Number 6	17.2	25.1	29.2	11.9		1.83	2.08	2.08	0.25
School Number 7	17.3	23.8	30.0	12.7		1.77	1.94	2.04	0.27
School Number 8	19.0	40.3	37.9	18.9		1.73	2.19	2.25	0.52
School Number 9	18.0	19.4	21.3	3.3		2.00	1.99	1.98	-0.02
School Number 10	22.6	27.5	37.1	14.5		1.87	2.08	2.34	0.47
School Number 11	19.8	27.0	29.5	9.7		1.78	1.96	2.06	0.28
School Number 12 <sup>1</sup>	23.3	47.4	36.2	12.9		1.93	2.61	2.34	0.41
School Number 13	21.5	39.1	37.6	16.1		1.93	2.32	2.23	0.30
School Number 14	35.0	38.3	50.0	15.0		2.28	2.30	2.52	0.24
School Number 15 <sup>1</sup>	27.8	15.8	45.0	17.2		2.22	1.95	2.35	0.13

<sup>1</sup> Also in Washington Reading Corps

**Focused Assistance Cohort 1 Middle/Junior High Schools  
Mathematics Improvement**

Building	2001 Percentage Meeting Standard	2002 Percentage Meeting Standard	2003 Percentage Meeting Standard	Change from 2001 to 2003		2001 Learning Index	2002 Learning Index	2003 Learning Index	Change from 2001 to 2003
School Number 1	5.8	3.0	4.7	-1.1		1.14	0.99	1.17	0.03
School Number 2	8.9	9.3	10.4	1.6		1.08	1.25	1.35	0.26
School Number 3	5.3	5.2	8.2	2.9		1.12	1.09	1.25	0.13
School Number 4	4.2	7.4	9.8	5.6		1.10	1.25	1.31	0.21
School Number 5	11.2	8.6	9.5	-1.7		1.27	1.29	1.35	0.07
School Number 6	13.6	17.4	21.8	8.2		1.44	1.55	1.67	0.23
School Number 7	11.2	14.6	18.2	7.0		1.36	1.43	1.55	0.19
School Number 8	13.1	14.9	37.9	24.8		1.31	1.46	2.07	0.76
School Number 9	6.0	4.5	1.6	-4.4		1.22	1.16	1.13	-0.09
School Number 10	13.2	10.0	28.6	15.4		1.45	1.40	1.86	0.40
School Number 11	15.5	19.3	17.2	1.7		1.44	1.59	1.62	0.18
School Number 12	20.9	26.3	31.9	11.0		1.58	1.71	1.87	0.29
School Number 13	19.6	21.5	26.6	7.0		1.61	1.65	1.84	0.24
School Number 14	23.7	12.5	16.7	-7.1		1.69	1.44	1.57	-0.12
School Number 15	11.1	10.5	25.0	13.9		1.67	1.32	1.85	0.18

## **Glossary**

### **Achievement Gap**

The achievement gap refers to differences in student performance that may be observed when comparing certain groups of students with other groups of students. For example, race/ethnicity is a lens through which differences in student performance may be observed. Other classifications commonly used to compare performance between groups of students include the presence or absence of economic disadvantage, English language proficiency, enrollment in programs such as special education, gender, and migrant status. Differences among student groups can be measured along a variety of dimensions, although the achievement gap is most often measured in the K-12 education system through such indicators as test scores, graduation and dropout rates, enrollment in various programs or courses and disciplinary actions.

### **Charter Schools**

Charter schools are alternative public schools that are given a high degree of operating flexibility and independence in exchange for a high degree of accountability for improved student performance. Forty of the 50 states authorize charter schools; there are more than 3,000 charter schools, serving some 700,000 students across the country.

### **Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR)**

Descriptions of the knowledge and skill Washington public school students are expected to achieve in reading, writing, communication, mathematics, science, civics, history, geography, economics, arts and health and fitness. Also called “academic standards,” the essential academic learning requirements were adopted by the Commission on Student Learning following broad-based input from Washington teachers, school administrators, parents, business leaders and members of the community. Currently, they are expressed at three distinct levels of attainment, called “benchmarks,” which correspond to the level of achievement expected at the three grade levels now tested on the state assessment.

### **ESEA/NCLB**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, is a federal statute whose purpose is to govern the use of certain federal funds provided to assist schools and school districts. First enacted in 1965, the ESEA is periodically re-authorized. A number of changes came with the 1994 re-authorization, but much more change resulted with the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA. The most recent re-authorization came in 2001-02, and is called the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The voluminous bill cannot be adequately summarized here, but does contain restrictions on the use of a variety of forms of federal education assistance. Some of the most important new provisions mean that states, in order to receive the funds, will be required annually to test students in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school, and to report results for disaggregated subgroups of students if the size of the subgroup is sufficient. The NCLB Act imposes certain accountability provisions in schools, districts and states receiving Title I funds if they fail to meet certain improvement targets.

**Secure Student Identifier**

A secure student identifier refers to a system of data collection and management that allows authorized officials to monitor individual student progress in areas such as test scores. It involves assigning a code to each individual student enrolled in public schools (in Washington state, the code would not be the student's social security number). The purposes of such a system include facilitating cooperation and information sharing among school systems to understand the unique and individual needs of a student so the student may be better served, and to increase the accuracy of data on student academic achievement and school performance. When a student transfers to a different school or school district, the secure student identifier allows the teachers and principal at the new school to use the data management system to learn about the student's academic history directly from the previous school attended by the student.

**Title I**

Title I is the first major section of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, re-named in 2001 the No Child Left Behind Act. Title I is the primary and by far the largest program of federal assistance to local school districts and schools. The funding is intended particularly to assist low-income and disadvantaged students achieve basic skills such as literacy and basic math skills. Thus a school or district's eligibility to receive Title I funds depends in part on the proportion of economically disadvantaged families in the community served by the school or district.

**Value-Added Assessment**

Value-added assessment involves using assessment systems that monitor individual student level progress over a defined period of time, usually on a yearly basis, by comparing assessment results at the beginning and the ending of the period used. The resulting data show how much academic growth took place during the period in question, that is, how much "value," in the form of additional knowledge and skill, was "added" during the school year to the level of knowledge and skill with which the student started the year. Assessment systems that measure what students know are heavily influenced by socioeconomic factors such as family income. By analyzing the change in individual student assessments (e.g., Sam's 2001 math score vs. Sam's 2002 math score), rather than the change in assessment results for a cohort (e.g., last year's fourth grade class with this year's fourth grade class), value added assessments such as those used in North Carolina are a much fairer basis for evaluating the relative effectiveness of school districts, schools and individual educators.

**WASL/Criterion-Referenced Assessment/Norm-Referenced Assessment**

A criterion-referenced assessment is one in which results are reported with respect to the level of attainment of a defined body of knowledge and skill. The other major type of assessment is norm-referenced; in norm-referenced tests, results for a student are reported with respect to how much better or worse that student did compared to other students in a baseline representative sampling of students, usually a nationwide sample. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is an example of a criterion-referenced test. Since the WASL is linked with academic standards developed in Washington, (the EALRs) it expresses the degree to which students have mastered those EALRs which are tested on the WASL. Put another way, criterion-referenced assessment is designed to show how well a student knows, for example, mathematics, not what percentage of students know more math than the tested student and what percentage of students know less math than the tested student. Norm-referenced tests tell us where a student ranks among all students in the 'norm' group, not how much math or which math concepts they know or don't know.